Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-91-055
Thursday
21 March 1991

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Palestinian Affairs

PLO To 'Retaliate' for Treatment in Kuwait

NC2103122991 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1145 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] The PLO has threatened to retaliate if the savage massacres against the Palestinians living in Kuwait continue. Muhammad Milhim has said that the PLO has received verified information about acts of murder, torture, and expulsion committed by the al-Sabah family (?clique) against the Palestinians there.

'Arafat Stresses Palestinian, Arab Unity

LD2003123791 Algiers APS in English 1032 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Algiers, 20/3/91 (APS)—The Palestinian people and their organization are "an indivisable whole". This is the main idea Yasir 'Arafat developed in an interview to the Algerian weekly "L'OBSERVATEUR" which devoted in its first issue a central place to the statements of the president of the state of Palestine.

"The colonialists who did not manage to find an alternative to the FLN [National Liberation Front] in Algeria, said 'Arafat, will not succeed in finding an alternative to PLO" and "the alternatives that are sought are alternatives of shame". In this context, Yasir 'Arafat said that if "PLO has presented a peace initiative that will enable its people to self-determination", on the other side "what the US Administration has announced is a new substitute of a Palestinian Camp David agreements" which is aimed at "imposing an Arab-Palestinian solution implying the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab countries". 'Arafat pointed out in this context that "they are also working on another axis, leading to a shameful solution and the creation of Banthoustans in Palestine, similar to the ones in South Africa".

Asked on the meaning of the tour of US Secretary of State James Baker in the Middle East, the president of the state of Palestine said that "James Baker has gone to the area to make the allies of the United States understand that they must normalize their diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv before any solution to the Palestinian problem". In this context, 'Arafat said "we are not duped" as "this solution is based on the Shamir plan of 1989". In this context 'Arafat said that they have given nothing to the Palestinians when the Arab money and force were only one force" but "what will the Arab countries gain now that the Arab money has destroyed the Arab military force?". In this context, 'Arafat said that "we are not affraid for our people in Palestine" but "we fear much the dangers of deep divisions which are threatening the Arab world which has become more than ever a split zone of influence".

Finally, concerning the results and consequences of the war against Iraq, 'Arafat said: "Unfortunately we have lost everything. The Arab money has financed the war which has destroyed the Arab military force and a vertical division appeared in the Arab world". In this context, 'Arafat declared: "I warn the Arab nation against new Sykes-Picot agreements which will split the Arab world as "what is happening now is being done at our expense".

Finally and in the same vein, 'Arafat considers that "the final declaration of the latest summit of the Union of Arab Maghreb calling to go beyond Arab divisions is of a particular importance".

Source Details Fatah Central Committee Meeting

NC2103135291 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 21 Mar 91 p 15

[By Nabil 'Amr]

[Text] Amman—The Fatah Central Committee is continuing its meetings in Tunisia under Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, to discuss developments in the Palestinian arena, considering events in the Gulf and their political, economic, and financial repercussions.

The blessed Palestinian intifadah in the occupied homeland was the main focus of interest, especially in terms of ways to support the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and escalate their struggle against the occupation. Fatah is also discussing the situation of Palestinian institutions now that sources of Arab financial support for the PLO have dried up and considering the reports of a large deficit in the budget of the intifadah and the Palestine National Fund.

The conferees are examining U.S. and European political moves on the Palestine question and the larger Middle East issue in the wake of the Gulf war. They are also looking into the centralization of information and political action to confront some suspect countermoves that are aimed at splintering the Palestinian ranks.

According to a responsible Palestinian source, the Fatah Central Committee meeting, which he described as very important, will also discuss convening the Palestine National Council and the principles and standards to govern future Palestinian movement in the Arab and international arenas.

The source said that the Central Committee is also examining a number of organizational and administrative questions following the martyrdom of two of its members, Salah Khalaf [Abu-Iyad] and Hayil 'Abd-al-Hamid [Abu-al-Hawl].

The source added that Fatah Central Committee and the higher committee for the glorious Palestinian intifadah will hold an expanded meeting to discuss ways to support the intifadah, decide on Palestinian political movement

inside and outside the occupied homeland, and coordinate positions to confront the Israeli conspiracy to undermine the unity of Palestinian ranks.

The source also noted that Fatah Central Committee is looking into reports on the situation of the Palestinian community in Kuwait, the alarming reports circulated by news media and agencies, and ways to protect the Palestinian people.

PNC's Al-Za'nun Reviews Peace Efforts, Kuwait

NC0703181791 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 7 Mar 91 p 8

[By Nabil Ghazzawi]

[Excerpts] Amman—Salim al-Za'nun, deputy speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], has commented on the five points Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi presented to his British counterpart Douglas Hurd on resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict without holding an international conference. He described these points as a timid reply to what the United States, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are proposing, as well as a rejection of the U.S.-Arab plan and the concept of an international conference.

In a statement to AL-DUSTUR, al-Za'nun said the Israeli use of the word "Palestinians" only indicates a determination to separate those living abroad from those living in the occupied territories, and to form a negotiating team only from elements within the occupied territories.

He emphasized that all attempts to exclude the present PLO leadership and to set up a new one will be doomed to failure because all Palestinians fully believe in maintaining the PLO as their sole legitimate representative.

He said the bet now is whether the United States will attack Israel, as it did Iraq, for continuing its rejection of the international conference as expressed in enemy Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir's plan, or whether it will disavow its promises to the Arabs, particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt. I cannot predict what will happen, but the United States will not attack Israel, its 54th [as published] state.

He called on the Arabs to respond to King Husayn's recent speech in which he called for acting according to Almighty God's words, "Come to common terms as between us and you." [koranic Verse] He said: If the Arabs positively respond by holding an Arab summit under the slogan of reconciliation, if they refuse to allow the past to overshadow the present and future, and if they agree to heal the rift between the Arabs and Muslims, then they will manage to impose the international conference, especially since they, and not Europe, Japan, or even the United States, are the ones who possess the oil wealth.

Regarding the criticism leveled at his recent statements in which he reassured the Palestinians in Kuwait that there would not be another Sabra and Shatila, al-Za'nun stressed that every sincere person should work at this stage according to what he thinks is right. I, he said, still believe that Kuwaiti-Jordanian-Palestinian relations were excellent during the past seven months. [passage omitted]

When we came up with the neutrality stand, he said, I wrote to the brother officials in the Palestinian leadership in Tunis saying that the neutral position will only make the Iraqis and the Kuwaitis blame us. Blame, however, remains better than hostility, because otherwise the Palestinian community in Kuwait will clash with the others, and blood will be shed. I also said that if this policy fails, you can recall us and send whoever is approved by the authority in Kuwait, whether the authority is Iraqi or the Kuwaiti legitimate government has returned.

I proudly say that this policy has until now spared Kuwait the catastrophe of division, hostility, and the use of weapons.

He also said, I am sure that when the brothers in Kuwait examine the issues, they will realize that their campaign against Brother Yasir 'Arafat was unjustified. He is one of a number of Arab leaders who openly asked President Saddam Husayn to withdraw from Kuwait. [passage omitted]

The PNC deputy speaker referred to what was announced to the effect that some countries, such as the United States, interfered to protect the Palestinians in Kuwait and stressed that, if this was true, we must not be deceived. The wolf does not interfere to protect the lamb but might pretend to do so with an aim unknown to us. At the end, we are faced by U.S. might and the Zionist objectives, and we are unwelcomed as an Arab nation and as states unless we recognize Israel and fulfill the U.S. demands in dealing with it and even protecting it.

He said that when the Arabs launch a campaign to liberate Palestine, the Saudis, Kuwaitis, Jordanians, and Palestinians will find the Untied States siding with Israel, thus forgetting all the promises we have been hearing about these days for holding an international peace conference and resolving the Palestine question.

Al-Za'nun hoped that some Arab brothers will not be deceived in thinking that the United States will accomplish for them what others failed to do in terms of holding an international peace conference and resolving the Palestine question in a manner which does justice to the Palestinians—a people who have suffered all sorts of tragedies. People might immigrate once, but our people have immigrated three times, and it seems that the fourth time is coming, he said. [passage omitted]

Egypt

'Abd-al-Majid Comments on Arab-Israeli Peace

NC2103000891 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2230 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has said that the Egyptian and Syrian forces remaining in the Gulf have a defensive posture to handle any foreign threats.

In an interview with AL-MUSAWWAR magazine to be published tomorrow, Thursday, the minister said there will soon be a development in Egyptian relations with Iran.

He emphasized that the Damascus Declaration is a prelude to a fresh dialogue with Islamic parties like Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, subject to their respect for Arab interests.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the Gulf crisis has confirmed the need for solutions to regional problems, especially the Palestinians issue and the Israeli occupation of Arab territory, in addition to development issues.

'Abd-al-Majid said he believed there was a genuine intention to address these problems, noting that there has already been talk of the prospects for a solution now that the Gulf war is over and the language of peace has taken centerstage. [passage indistinct]

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said he believed Israel is the party that must listen and be responsive, since it is the party occupying Arab land.

The minister said James Baker's Middle East tour and his discussions with the foreign ministers of Egypt and Syria and the Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh came in the context of President Bush's remarks of 7 March, outlining an Arab-Israeli settlement.

'Abd-al-Majid speculated that the United States could move in two directions—one concerning relations between Arab states and Israel, and the other regarding the Palestine issue and building bridges between the two sides.

The minister urged Israel to show good faith on the question of peace, since in this case the Arab states were victims and Israel victimizer. The Arab states, for their part, added 'Abd-al-Majid, will have to reciprocate whatever good faith is demonstrated by Israel.

He stated that Israel stands to gain the most from peace. He emphasized that the peace must be based on Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land and a resolution of the Palestine issue. If these two conditions are not met, as President Bush pointed out in his 7 March address, there can be no peace, which is also clear to the European nations, 'Abd-al-Majid said.

Asked whether Egypt and Syria share a common approach to peace, 'Abd-al-Majid said: Egyptian and Syrian views are identical. Both countries call for an end to Israeli occupation and for a solution to the Palestinian issue. I believe there is no longer an obstacle to the establishment of normal relations between Syria and Israel. We have heard statements to this effect from German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich-Genscher, who expressed such a belief.

'Abd-al-Majid said that an international conference is one of Syria's main demands. Negotiations will take place under the umbrella of the international conference. He expressed the opinion that an Arab-Israel dialogue within the framework of an international conference is acceptable. It is up to the Palestinian side to make the decision regarding the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue.

'Abd-al-Majid stressed that the PLO is the one to determine its leaders. He said that Egypt was not making an accusation when it said that the PLO was wrong on the Gulf crisis and must correct this mistake.

'Abd-al-Majid also said that Jordan, being a confrontation state, has a key role to play in solving the Palestinian issue, and in a peaceful settlement.

Asked about Egypt's concept of how long the United States will remain serious regarding a solution of the Palestinian issue, 'Abd-al-Majid said that Egypt has an objective and there is clarity of vision in Egypt's moves. We must work to succeed and we must help the other side succeed.

Alleged U.S. Plan for Gulf Security Described

PM2003152391 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 12 Mar 91 pp 1, 9

['Abd-al-Sattar Abu-Husayn report: "United States Rejects Damascus Declaration, Submits Alternative Plan For Security System"]

[Text] After the Eight Arab states announced the so-called the "Damascus declaration" for political and military cooperation between Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf states in an attempt to exclude non-Arab parties from security arrangements in the region, the U.S. Administration quickly informed the coalition Arab capitals of its view of security arrangement after the Gulf war.

Sources have revealed the content of the U.S. plan, which excluded an Arab states' monopoly on security arrangements in the region and emphasized the need for Israel to participate, and participate effectively, so as to play a bigger role in these arrangements.

The U.S. plan did not refer to any linkage between Israel's participation in the security system and the resolution of the Palestinian issue. It also excluded Iranian participation in security arrangements in the Gulf.

U.S. Secretary of State Baker is expected to discuss his country's plan with the coalition states during his tour of the region.

At the political level, Syria received the U.S. plan with the utmost concern, noting that the question of the Israeli-occupied Arab territories, including the Golan, was totally ignored. This is in addition to the exclusion of the Iranian ally from the security arrangements.

With regard to the future of the Arab forces in the Gulf, the U.S. plan did include the expansion or extension of these forces. This is in addition to increasing their size and armament, supplying them with U.S. weapons, and coordinating between them and any U.S. presence in the Gulf agreed between the U.S. Administration and the Gulf states. That indicates there is a U.S. plan to set up military bases, the majority of which would allocated for stockpiling the weapons and equipment of more than three military divisions that would be quickly summoned to the region to support the Arab forces stationed in the Gulf in the event of a threat to the region's security, thus saving for the U.S. Administration 75 percent of the time taken to dispatch these forces with their logistics.

Bush 'Mistakes,' Mitterrand 'Principle' Contrasted

PM2003162791 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 17 Mar 91 p1

[Jamal Badawi article: "Bush's Recent Statements Disappointed Arabs"]

[Text] The famous proverb about the mountain giving birth to a mouse applies to the statements made by President Bush after his meeting with President Mitterrand in Martinique.

The mountain is represented by that flow of statements coming from the U.S. Administration throughout the Gulf crisis telling the world that a just settlement of the Palestinian question—fulfilling the Palestinian people's aspirations and eliminating the injustices inflicted on them by the United States—was imminent. Then we had President Bush's statements to confirm the continuation of the arbitrary U.S. policy, indicating that he was making the same mistakes made by former U.S. presidents.

The first mistake was President Bush's assertion that he was opposed to an international conference on the Middle East "for the time being."(!?) That means postponing a solution indefinitely, shelving the issue so that the world would forget that there is an urgent issue which should be resolved, then the U.S. Administration would be preoccupied with the presidential campaign, and there would be an endless vicious cycle.

The second mistake was President Bush's assertion that an international conference, if held, would be an opportunity for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. The U.S. President forgets that the core of the Middle East conflict is Palestinian-Israeli not Arab-Israeli. The Palestinian problem is the heart of the conflict and the cause of trouble in the Middle East. If that problem were to be solved justly, there would be no problems between Israel and the Arab states. The danger in the Bush statement is the fact that it is in full agreement with Shamir's concept of the issue, namely that it is an Arab not a Palestinian issue. Shamir imagines that an Israeli withdrawal from the other occupied Arab territories would end the conflict, but then the original problem would continue to rage and threaten the entire region with explosion. This concept is rejected by the Arabs because its aim is to smother the Palestinian question and ignore it for ever.

The third mistake was President Bush's assertion that the United States is opposed to a Palestinian state (?!). If what Bush says is going to be the constitution of the international conference then it is better not to hold an international conference on that basis because any plan that overlooks the Palestinian state would be stillborn. Any talks or negotiations aimed at aborting the idea of a Palestinian state are bound to fail. The explosive problem would continue until it destroys everything.

Any plan that overlooks the Palestinian state would be rejected, rejected, rejected. It would be rejected by the Palestinians, the Arabs, and all free world leaders headed by President Mitterrand, who has clearly spoken of the need to recognize the Palestinian people's identity and adhere to the UN resolutions calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state and an Israeli state.

We say to Mitterrand: You have proved that you are a man of principle.

To Bush I say: You have uncovered your intentions.

Paper Views U.S. Ideas on Security Arrangements

PM2003140891 Cairo AL-SHAB in Arabic 12 Mar 91 pp 1, 9

[Mahmud Bakri report: "Baker Discusses Permanent U.S. Presence During Visit to Region and Israel"]

[Excerpt] In his recent talks with a number of Arab leaders over the past few days U.S. Secretary of State James Baker emphasized that the U.S. Armed Forces would maintain their naval presence in the Gulf at the same level as during the war against Iraq. He said that small reductions would made in some nonstrategic units.

Baker presented U.S. ideas for retaining and spreading military bases throughout the Gulf states, stressing the need to set up six military bases in Saudi Arabia, four in Kuwait, and two in in each of the other Gulf states.

He pointed out that the U.S. Defense Department believes there is a need to provide these bases with all facilities and various kinds of defensive and offensive weapons, provided that mobile U.S. units are stationed in these bases and coordination operations are maintained between these bases and the foreign naval fleets, one of whose tasks would be to protect Gulf security.

In his talks with the Gulf leaders the U.S. secretary of state pointed out that urgent emergency and coordination plans should be agreed in advance between the U.S. and Arab military commands concerned with providing a security system in the Gulf. He indicated that emergency plans could be practiced in joint exercises, which the U.S. ideas suggest should be conducted once a year.

During his meeting Sunday with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf Cooperation Council states the U.S. secretary of state sharply criticized the Damascus agreement reached last Wednesday, since it openly ignored the U.S. role in the security arrangements in the region. Baker also criticized the agreement's permission for other Arab states to join the agreement if they display good intentions toward the signatory states.

The U.S. secretary rejected the idea of that agreement's being joined by any parties whose policy might conflict with U.S. policy in the region. In view of this, the indications are that Washington will be involved in drawing up the emergency plans to confront any security threats to its allied states in the region; that it will implement the major part of these plans in cooperation with Britain; and that it is the naval fleets and some U.S. bases in the region that are primarily involved in implementing these plans.

James Baker emphasized that the endorsement of security arrangements in the region requires the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In his talks with Saudi and Kuwaiti officials he urged that a favorable atmosphere be created in order to achieve stability in the region, specifying two fundamental aims in that regard: first, the need for a rapprochement between the Arab states and especially the Gulf states—and Israel, by establishing foundations for economic, tourism, and security cooperation with it and by establishing diplomatic relations with it.

Second, the Arab states must completely stop dealing with the PLO and its present leadership, which, according to the U.S.-Israeli view, is the biggest obstacle to a suitable solution of the Palestinian problem. The U.S. secretary stated these aims during his meeting with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf cooperation states. Syria demanded, however, that pressure be put on Israel to make it withdraw from the Golan Heights. Baker promised to work to achieve that aim, but urged Syria to display flexibility in its relations with Israel [passage omitted]

SFRY Foreign Minister Discusses Gulf Events

Meets With 'Abd-al-Majid

NC1903130291 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1950 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—A round of Egyptian-SFRY talks was held this evening under the cochairmanship of Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and Budimir Lonchar, SFRY federal secretary for foreign affairs, who is currently visiting Cairo. The talks, which took place at the Foreign Ministry, dealt with the latest developments in the Gulf region and the Middle East, regional security arrangements, and the coordination of stands between Egypt and the SFRY in their capacity as cofounders of the Nonaligned Movement.

The Egyptian and SFRY sides also discussed relations among the Mediterranean littoral states and ways to achieve a solution to the Middle East conflict and reviewed current developments and future possibilities in the SFRY and the promotion of bilateral ties in all spheres.

Terms Cairo Ties 'Strong, Friendly'

NC1803225591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2200 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Budimir Loncar, SFRY federal secretary for foreign affairs, has said that his talks this evenig with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, focused on developments in the Gulf region in the aftermath of the war, and on ways of developing and enhancing SFRY-Egyptian ties, which he termed "friendly and strong."

In a statement made at the end of the first round of talks, Loncar added that Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid apprised him of Egypt's assessment of the Gulf situation and of efforts currently under way to advance peace endeavors in the Middle East and in the Mediterranean in light of the initiative calling for the convocation of a conference on cooperation and security to be attended by the Mediterranean littoral states. He went on to say that the role of the Nonaligned Movement members was also discussed in this regard. Moreover, he indicated that contacts are being currently held to discuss the holding of a meeting by the foreign ministers of the Nonaligned Movement member states to discuss this issue.

With regard to the internal situation in the SFRY, Loncar pointed out that the SFRY is currently facing a constitutional crisis, adding that the SFRY Government is working to find a solution to it. A second round of talks is scheduled for tomorrow, Tuesday. Afterward, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak will receive the SFRY federal secretary for foreign affairs.

Comments on Yugoslavia Crisis

LD1903181391 Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service in Serbo-Croatian 1601 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (TANJUG)—Egyptian President Husni Mubarak today expressed his concern at the situation in Yugoslavia but Budimir Loncar, federal secretary for foreign affairs, said in response that he does not believe that a civil war will flare up in the country.

From the start, the talks in Cairo today between Mubarak and Loncar were dominated by the crisis in

Yugoslavia. The Egyptian president said that he is "concerned, but at the same time believes that Yugoslavia will be able to overcome the present crisis." Mubarak stressed that "Yugoslavia's stability and its peaceful reformist course are of great importance, particularly for the Nonaligned Movement."

Budimir Loncar's visit to Egypt marks the end of his Near East tour during which he also visited Syria and Kuwait in his capacity as representative of the country which at the moment chairs the Nonaligned Movement and as the SFRY foreign affairs minister.

The federal secretary told Mubarak, and his counterpart Meguid during their two rounds of talks, that the crisis in Yugoslavia is serious, but that "it should be viewed in the context of an orientation to profound reforms in the economic, political and constitutional spheres."

Loncar reiterated this point at a brief news conference outside the presidential palace following his talks with Mubarak. On this occasion he also said that "the crisis can only be resolved peacefully and democratically."

Asked whether he believes in the danger of a civil war in Yugoslavia, the federal secretary for foreign affairs said: "Despite the incidents and problems, I do not believe in the possibility of civil war."

Mubarak and Loncar exchanged views about the postwar security order in the Gulf, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Palestinian issue. They agreed on the need for a new international security order to be based on the UN Charter. It was also stressed that the liberation of Kuwait has opened up realistic prospects for a peace process in the Near East. In this context Mubarak emphaszied the role which the Nonaligned Movement and Yugoslavia as its current leader could play in guiding the above international issues in positive direction.

The two sides confirmed the identity of views on how to ensure a successful outcome of the Mediterranean conference on security and cooperation.

Egypt and Yugoslavia will make efforts to advance cooperation in the economic sphere. Loncar told journalists that he and Mubarak also discussed prospects for Egyptian and Yugoslav joint ventures on the markets of the Arab countries in the Gulf.

This morning Budimir Loncar had a brief conversation with Butros Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs. The federal secretary for foreign affairs left Cairo for Belgrade this afternoon.

Further on Meetings

NC1903175091 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1426 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak today received Budimir Loncar, Yugoslav federal secretary for foreign affairs, who is visiting Egypt. Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and Yugoslav Ambassador Ivan Ivekovic also attended the meeting.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid described President Mubarak's meeting with the Yugoslav official, during which bilateral ties were discussed, as "a very good meeting." Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid praised Egyptian-Yugoslav ties which he described as "excellent." He welcomed Loncar's visit to Egypt.

Budimir Loncar said that in his meeting with President Mubarak, they exchanged views on a number of issues, including the situation in the Gulf and the Middle East. He stated that a "good opportunity" exists to make new efforts to promote the peace process.

The Yugoslav federal secretary for foreign affairs said: We agreed on the need to increase cooperation among nonaligned countries in light of recent international developments. He added that in this connection they agreed that the United Nations should be given a leading role and that it is necessary to establish stability in order to guarantee international security.

Responding to a question on Yugoslavia's future, the SFRY federal secretary for foreign affairs said that he explained to President Husni Mubarak—who expressed interest in this issue—that Yugoslavia is currently going through an important transitional phase whose aim is to embark on basic change and move from one political and social system to another.

Budimir Loncar said that Yugoslavia is working hard to establish a market economy. He announced: We have made some progress in this regard because Yugoslavia lies outside the framework of Eastern Europe. In answer to another question, Loncar said that he does not see any prospects for a civil war in Yugoslavia.

He added: We do not deny that there is a crisis in Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, we are able to proceed with the changes toward democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and a market economy. The Yugoslav federal secretary for foreign affairs spoke of the problems facing his country, noting that one of them is to advance and determine the future of federal Yugoslavia and whether it will be a federation or a confederation. Loncar said that the Yugoslav state presidency currently has its hands tied with regard to these problems. Nevertheless, the parliament is in session, the government is operating as usual, and life is normal.

Government, Iran To Exchange Ambassadors

NC2003163991 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Today Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, met with Ambassador Ahmad Namiq, head of the Egyptian relations office in Tehran, before he goes to Tehran on Saturday [23 March] to inaugurate the office there on (26?) March in accordance to the agreement between the two countries.

The Foreign Ministry received the information from the Iranian Foreign Ministry that Mr. (Behzar Khatiri) will head the Iranian interests office in Cairo and that he will arrive on 25 March. These offices are considered a beginning of the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Lebanese Paper Reports Rift in Jordanian Ties

NC2103101191 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 18 Mar 91 p 12

[Text] The Egyptian Foreign Ministry summoned the Jordanian ambassador in Cairo recently and informed him of Egypt's rejection of and resentment against the bad treatment the Egyptian ambassador and the embassy staff in Jordan are receiving in Amman. The Foreign Ministry said that the ambassador and the staff receive threatening letters and that Jordanian citizens chase the embassy officials in cars. The Egyptian ambassador's residence was attacked and damaged by demonstrators, who also set the Egyptian military attache's car on fire and forced him to stay inside the embassy for five hours.

AL-SHIRA' learned that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry asked the Jordanian ambassador to pass a letter to his government regarding Egypt's intent to close its embassy in Amman and withdraw the staff. The letter also discusses the severance of Egyptian-Jordanian relations if any of the Egyptian diplomats in Amman are harmed in any way.

Sudan

Four Lawyers Released From Detention

AB2003184091 London BBC World Service in English 1709 GMT 19 Mar 91

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[Text] Perhaps mindful of its less than perfect human rights record on the onset of Ramadan, the authorities in Sudan have released four detainees. Last week, three former ministers who had been jailed by military tribunals on corruption charges were pardoned. According to today's announcement in the government-owned newspaper, the four latest releases were all lawyers, as Kwang Obatt reports in this telex from Khartoum:

[Begin studio announcer recording] The AL-INQADH AL-WATANI newspaper named the released men as (Mustafa Abdul Gadir), former deputy secretary general of the Sudan Bar Association, who has been in detention since the takeover by General al-Bashir in 1989; (Al-Tahib Abd-al-Judayri), member of the outlawed Sudanese Communist Party; (Shamsaddin 'Abdallah Khalil); and a fourth lawyer whom the paper failed to identify by name.

The daily also failed to specify when the lawyers are to be set free or how long they had been in detention. It quoted the current president of the steering committee of the Sudanese Bar Association, (Mohamed Ziad Hamour), as saying that his association would carry on with its efforts to release three more lawyers who remained in detention. (Hamour) failed to name the remaining lawyers, who, he said, had been held for political reasons. He described as courageous and timely the decision which, he said, demonstrates the government's concern for justice.

(Hamour) has meanwhile urged the Arab Bar Association to pressure their governments to follow Sudan's lead and set all political detainees free. He also appealed to these lawyers associations to send congratulations to Gen. al-Bashir on the release of those detained. [end recording]

Bahr Al-Ghazal Government Force Defects to SPLA

EA1603180591 (Clandestine) Radio of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in English 1300 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Excerpts] The main points of the news: 'Umar al-Bashir's Popular Defense forces of the Fertit [non-Dinka] tribes of western Bahr al-Ghazal [have] joined the SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] in mass [as heard]; peace comes to western Bahr al-Ghazal; and SPLA completes total control of all parts of southern Sudan [as heard]. [martial music]

Here now is the news in detail. After one month of political work, SPLA forces of Bright Star Campaign Phase Four, Sector One, have been joined by the government militia of the Fertit tribes, known previously as Peace Forces or the Popular Defense Forces, on 10 March 1991. The commander of the Popular Defense Forces in Bahr al-Ghazal, Brigadier Andreya Dominic Nafara, and his two deputies, Colonel Angelo Taban Biajo and Colonel Anthony Fade Taban, formerly joined the SPLA with all their forces and all their weapons. [martial music] [passage omitted] Adding the new force to those who had joined the SPLA earlier, this brings the total Fertit standing force to the SPLA to over 1,000-strong. [martial music]

Expressing their anger at Khartoum, the former government militia said Khartoum had always misled them, taken them for granted, and put them in unnecessary enmity and hostilities with their brothers and neighbors, the Jur Chuol and Dinka [tribes]. They pledged that this will never happen again. They said enough was enough, that it was the same Khartoum that decimated the Fertit tribes in the turn of the last century.

The former militiamen pledged complete loyalty to the SPLM [Sudanese People's Liberation Movement]-SPLA and its noble objective to build a new Sudan, a new non-racial Sudan of freedom, justice, and equality for all.

To prove their loyalty to the SPLA, the former Fertit militia have pledged to start joint operations inside Wau town with effect from yesterday, 15 March 1991. And

accordingly, the Bright Star Campaign Phase Four commander here orders all SPLA forces around Wau to join and carry out these attacks on Wau side by side with the former Fertit Popular Defense forces. SPLA Oye! [martial music]

The officers whose names just go announced here appeal over Radio SPLA to their colleagues inside Wau town and Raga [in western Bahr al-Ghazal] and to all the chiefs to join them immediately and fight the enemy inside the town and on Wau-Raga road. The western side of Wau town from (Bagari), the former headquarters of 'Umar al-Bashir's so-called People's Defense forces, is now under full and firm control of the SPLM-SPLA.

The Bright Star Campaign Phase Four commander here orders that any vehicle moving on the Raga-Wau road is an enemy and the former Fertit militia and all the SPLA forces in the area are ordered to destroy such convoys, in addition to an immediate military offensive on Wau and Raga towns to expel 'Umar al-Bashir's forces and establish an SPLM-SPLA administration of the new Sudan. [martial music]

In a message to Radio SPLA, the chairman and commander in chief of SPLM-SPLA, Comrade John Garang de Mabior, passed millions of congratulations to Commander Daniel Awet Akot for this magnificent political-military victory. The SPLM-SPLA chairman and commander in chief personally welcomes the former commander of the Fertit Popular Defense force, his two deputies, officers, NCO's, and men, and warmly congratulates them for this very wise decision to bring peace and unity to Bahr al-Ghazal under the SPLM-SPLA. The chairman and commander in chief greets and congratulates all the chiefs and citizens of the Fertit tribes for liberating themselves from the forces of deception and oppression, and he assures them of peace, justice, prosperity, and equality in the new Sudan. [martial music]

Tunisia

President Delivers Independence Day Address 20 Mar

LD2003142291 Tunis Domestic Service in Arabic 1035 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Independence Day address by Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from Carthage Palace in Tunis—live]

[Excerpts] Ladies and gentlemen, fellow citizens:

I have the pleasure to extend the sincerest congratulations and best wishes to every Tunisian, male and female, on the occasion of our celebration of the 35th anniversary of our national independence. [passage omitted recalling the struggle for independence and the pride every Tunisian derives from the achievement, the occasion's coincidence with youth day]

Fellow citizens, I previously emphasized that national reconciliation is required in order to overcome the negative legacy of the past and that it should be realized, maintained, and taken care of. This has become more important today than at any other time in the past. This is because the various international challenges facing our country, due to the changes witnessed by this world at the beginning of this decade, are very quickly being doubled by the acute crisis in the Gulf region, the consequences of which directly affect us.

We are happy to see the full mutual understanding manifested by the identical attitude of the leadership and the people regarding this crisis. We have seen national solidarity emerge seriously and spontaneously. We are full of hope and optimism that this mutual understanding will continue so we may experience the current period in peace and safety and direct all our energies toward achieving our development work.

All male and female citizens have a role in the continuation and reinforcement of this reconciliation, as it is a collective interest. The role of society is fundamental, particularly the national organizations, political parties, and the information media.

The state initiated the achievement of this objective through the measures it took. It is determined to continue its work in this direction in accordance with the course chosen since 7 November. We are always prepared to develop the political relations among the various quarters, in line with as the society's needs and depending on the sincerity and good faith of these quarters and their adherence to the laws of the land and the rules of sound political action. This we do out of our conviction in the necessity of plurality and the importance of these institutions in guiding opinions and developing them. They play a role in the organization of political life and the enrichment of civil opinion, and share in shouldering responsibility for the homeland and the citizens. [passage omitted]

Fellow citizens: The society that we are working relentlessly to establish, while it requires increasing support of the democratic course, makes it obligatory on all to respect the law and its supremacy. We are prepared to reinforce this course, which we chose by our free will and to which all sections of our people have responded. We are determined to continue (?to stand) with all firmness in the face of all kinds of irresponsibility and violations.

The violations of the law by extremists and the damage they cause to human life and national resources has reached such a level that it requires the state and the entire society to confront it with total strength and firmness and to deter whoever indulges in violating the security of the citizens, his achievements, and his rights.

We express our pleasure at the denunciation of such crimes in a country that has pledged to disseminate justice and freedom by all the social factions, organizations, and political parties. We wish to express our appreciation for all the strugglers in their bases for their decisive stance against these practices, which conflict with a state founded by law, with civilized behavior, and with the values of civilized society. The troublers and

disorder in some sections of the universities and secondary schools have prevented the academic institutions from fully performing their educational, pedagogical, and national role. This is completely unacceptable.

We have placed the educational trust in the hands of academicians. We adopted educational reform as a successful means for the creation of a civilized life and the achievement of the best results with the hightest quality. The national community will not hesitate to continue to devote the maximum possible resources for this purpose.

Furthermore, we have enabled the students to form their own trade unions, out of our anxiousness to ensure the organization and rationalization of student life.

Is it logical, after all that, to bypass the country's laws and disrupt the interests of its sons and squander the resources it has allocated beyond its means for the realization of its revival, in which it pinned its hopes on its youth? [passage omitted]

There is no room for anarchy and lack of discipline in the universities. There is no room for the universities and educational institutions turning into arenas for the settlement of political accounts that mislead the nascent generations and deceive them by false slogans that instigate sabotage and obstruction or push them into the public streets.

While all sides shoulder responsiblity, we consider such behavior a criminal act against the country. We call on parents and education specialists to carry out their duties and side with the state to end this matter.

Citizens: Our media, which has recently proved its maturity and ability to manage modern means, is called upon to rise to the level of this critical phase in the life of our country. Our stances have always stemmed from our firm values and principles. The conscious national unanimity primarily agrees on the inevitable reliance on our abilities.

We have strong determination and a firm will to press ahead with the democratic process. We have expressed our strong condemnation against violence and our absolute rejection of extremism and slipping toward the abyss. Faced with these concerns and issues, the media should play a pivotal role in deepening civilian feeling, consolidating the values of tolerance, spreading free thinking, and bolstering national dialogue.

While we would like to highlight the competence and devotion of the media, we must draw attention to the bias, sensationalism, and spasmodic dealing with events by some members of this press. This fact restricts the media from playing its required role of informing and enlightening public opinion.

Objectivity and fairness are two basic conditions for any modern media. Likewise, refraining from and rising above inflamming feelings are necessary for any successful media. There should be no dependency on and no animosity toward any side. Any bias or subjectivity should be channeled toward serving the interests of Tunisia. [passage omitted on reforms in all fields, recalling Tunisia's efforts during the Gulf crisis, hope that Arab unity will be restored soon for the sake of the Arab people, hope that harmony and peace will reign in the new world order, and support for the Palestinian struggle for independence and freedom]

Medical Team's Help Refused by Iraq

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

LD2003210891 London KUNA in Arabic 1317 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Tunis, 20 March (KUNA)—Tunisian Public Health Minister Daly Jazi has stated that the Tunisian medical mission which was sent to Iraq during the Kuwait liberation war was prevented by the Iraqi authorities from offering its services. The minister was replying to interpolations by a number of Tunisian Chamber of Deputies members during yesterday's session.

Jazi said that the Tunisian medical mission, comprising 23 people, carried with it 5 tons of medicines and three medical machines to Iraq.

He added that the Tunisian mission left for Amman where it stayed for two days before moving under extremely difficult security conditions to Bahdad, where it proceeded to the Iraqi Red Crescent Hospital.

The Tunisian minister added that the Red Crescent Hospital told the mission that "it was in no need for its services. When the mission members asked to go to the front, the hospital refused to allow them, on the grounds that the mission came to serve in Baghdad."

The Tunisian mission was thus forced to stay for 10 days in Iraq before deciding to return to Tunisia at its own expense.

Members of the Tunisian medical mission recently issued a statement, according to one of the Tunisian newspapers, in which they justified their return to Tunisia by "the abundance and efficiency of Iraqi doctors."

The paper claimed that a similar thing has happened with other Arab medical missions which returned to their respective countries during the Kuwait liberation war.

Bahrain

Joint Forces Commander Arrives in Bahrain

On Regional Tour

NC2003022791 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1438 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Manama, 19 Mar (WAKH)—Staff Lieutenant General Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, commander of the joint forces and theater of operations in Saudi Arabia, and his delegation arrived in Manama this afternoon on a visit to Bahrain. During the visit, he will hold talks on current and new developments in the region after the liberation of the State of Kuwait. [passage omitted]

The visit of the commander of the joint forces and theater of operations to Bahrain comes within a tour of a number of Arab countries and Gulf Cooperation Council members states.

Departs for Qatar

NC2003164291 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1405 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Manama, 20 Mar (WAKH)—Staff Lieutenant General Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, commander of the joint forces and operations theater in Saudi Arabia, and his accompanying delegation, left Manama this afternoon for Doha following a two-day visit to Bahrain as part of a tour of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] countries. [passage omitted]

On his current tour of the GCC countries, Egypt, and Syria, Prince Khalid Bin-Sultan said that its purpose is to submit a report on the activities of each force of the countries that participated in the liberation of Kuwait. He praised the part played by the Arab forces, which demonstrated combat competence during the war.

Kuwait

Amir Accepts Government Resignation

LD2003231491 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 2100 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Excerpt] The heir apparent and prime minister, Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, today tendered the government's resignation to his highness the amir, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah. The amir has issued a decree accepting the resignation and providing for the continuation of the ministers's discharge of their urgent responsibilities until a new cabinet is formed.

Shaykh Sa'd said in his letter of resignation to the amir: You previously charged me with forming a government and, on 20 June 1990, your highness issued a decree forming the cabinet.

His highness the heir appararent and prime minister added: While this cabinet was preparing for an ambitious surge toward a lightened and dawning future compatible with your highness's aspirations, God the Almighty ordained that Kuwait and its generous and loyal people be afflicted with a vicious agression by the criminal Iraqi regime which was followed by a hateful occupation during which the occupation forces committed various kinds of indescribable, unimaginable and terrible crimes against the peaceful Kuwaiti people. This matter led to a situation in which this cabinet faced a new and complex state of affairs which made it mobilize all its capabilities to defeat the aggression, defend the cause of Kuwait, and internationally isolate the aggressor Iraqi regime. Thanks to God almighty, to your leadership and guidance, and to the cooperation of the brothers and friends, the cabinet was able to deliver its message in full and was able, thanks to God, to mobilize the people and governments of the states of the world against the hateful aggressor.

Shaykh Sa'd affirmed that, in this historical phase, after God had granted us victory and after we had surpassed the occupation stage, it became clear to me and my colleagues, the members of the government, that the objective facts that came to light after liberation impel us all to give your highness the opportunity to take whatever measures you deem appropriate and suitable in preparation for beginning the building and construction of what the tyrant occupier had destroyed. This matter led me to tender to your highness my resignation and that of my colleagues, the members of the government, thanking you for your support and assistance and affirming that your guidance had the utmost impact in making the government perform its tasks in the required manner and within the limits available during the period of occupation. [passage omitted]

Red Cross Announces Prisoner Release Scheduled

LD2103112391 London KUNA in Arabic 1005 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Text] Geneva, 1 March—It was announced here today that a number of Kuwaiti POW's will be released from Iraqi detention camps.

An International Red Cross Committee spokesman, Gabriel de Montmollen, told KUNA that 1,150 POW's will be returned to their homeland after they are handed over to the International Red Cross Committee later today. He added that the POWs will be sent to Saudi Arabia, because the committee cannot move southward to receive them due to the instability in that area.

The spokesman added that the Kuwaiti POW's will be handed over at Tikrit in Iraq, where they were taken by force after they had been recklessly arrested by Iraqi forces while they were withdrawing from Kuwait. It was stated that these detainees "are considered POW's because they include a number of military."

Concluding his statement to KUNA, the committee spokesman said that there are about 4,000 Kuwaiti detainees in Iraqi prisons, including some civilians and they will be released shortly.

Oman

Ministry Welcomes Saudi-Iranian Decision on Ties

NC2003132591 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1250 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Muscat, 20 Mar (WAKH)—Oman has welcomed the decision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran to restore diplomatic ties. A spokesman for the Omani Foreign Ministry told the ONA today that this is an important step toward fruitful cooperation among all the region's countries to bring security and peace in the Gulf and in order to harness additional capabilities for cooperation among Islamic countries.

Qatar

Cabinet Welcomes Saudi-Iranian Ties Restoration

NC2103110391 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0615 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Doha, 20 Mar (WAKH)—The Qatari cabinet has expressed satisfaction with and welcomes the agreement reached between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Iran on the resumption of their diplomatic relations.

During its weekly meeting under His Highness Shaykh Hamad-Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, heir apparent and defense minister, in Doha last night, the cabinet regarded the resumption of relations between the two fraternal Muslim neighbors as a basic buttress that ensures for the Gulf region further prosperity and progress and that secures for all the region's people the means of constructive cooperation so that they may dedicate their efforts and mobilize their capabilities to achieve the security and stability for which they aspire. [passage omitted]

French Defense Minister Arrives in Doha 16 Mar

NC1603182591 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1410 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Text] Doha, 16 Mar (WAKH)—French Defense Minister Pierre Joxe arrived in Doha today on a short visit to Qatar as part of a tour of several countries in the region. During the tour, the French minister will inspect French forces in the anti-Iraq coalition forces.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY said that the French minister will hold talks with Qatari officials on bilateral relations, particularly those dealing with military affairs.

Saudi Arabia

Commitment to 'Desert Storm' Funding Reaffirmed

LD2003212991 Riyadh Saudi Arabia Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] A responsible source has made the following statement to SPA: In view of what was mentioned today by some media, including AFP, concerning the contributions of some Gulf states toward the funding of Operation Desert Storm for the liberation of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like to reaffirm its total commitment to what had been agreed upon in this regard. The Kingdom will, as usual, adhere to every commitment it makes in accordance with the existing basis, and it rejects doubts created by any party concerning its position toward this commitment.

Iraqi Human Rights Group Calls For Saudi Help

LD2003215891 Riyadh Saudi Arabia Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, has received a cable from the human rights organization of Iraq signed by Dr. Sahib al-Hakim, which said:

News from inside Iraq shows that Iraqi forces loyal to the dictator Saddam Husayn are bombarding residential areas in numerous towns in Iraq, and that this indiscriminate bombardment has led to the killing of defenseless civilians, including children, women, and men [as heard]. He added: Military attacks by helicopters and heavy artillery have caused and are still causing shortages of food and medicines and the death of thousands of people, to an extent which is making it difficult to bury the corpses lying in the streets.

Dr. Sahib al-Hakim called upon the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, to immediately intervene in order to save the tortured people of Iraq. He said: The people are looking forward to your support and help and are full of hope that you will rid the Iraqi people of this extreme torture which has been going on for 22 years.

In his cable, Dr. al-Hakim called upon dynamic consciences [al-dama'ir al-hayyah] to act seriously in order to save the defenseless Iraqi people and to stop the policy of extermination and public killings is being pursued by the forces of the head of the Iraqi regime.

Report on 20 Mar National Assembly Statement

NC2003120291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1935 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 Mar (INA)—In a statement released today, the National Assembly exhorted the sons of Iraq to stand as an impregnable wall in order to bury the the fierce conspiracies of the enemies and their criminal henchmen. It said that Iraq is being subjected to the ugliest onslaught in its modern history aimed at undermining its national unity and civilized achievements attained by the 17-30 July revolution under President Saddam Husayn. It said that this conspiracy is the last chapter in the imperialist-Atlantic-Zionist coalition plot that exceeded the Mogul invasion of Baghdad in AD 1258. This plot came right after the difficult circumstances that Iraq encountered following the economic blockade and the armed aggression that targeted the infrastructure of our people and destroyed economic, medical, cultural, and scientific establishments and services, and then created sedition, chaos, subversion, the slaughter of defenseless women, children, and the elderly, looting of public and private property, and the burning of documents belonging to the sons of the people in the state's public and general services establishments.

The statement said that the subversion is linked to the interference by neighbors with which Iraq had been sincerely determined to establish peace and turn over a new leaf and establish new relations based on good neighborliness, mutual confidence, and fruitful cooperation to serve the prosperity and happiness of the people of the region as well as world peace and security. However, they disappointed our people's hopes by taking this treacherous, aggressive stand. The statement emphasized the assembly's denunciation and condemnation of this unpatriotic and subversive course by misled cliques that have nothing to do with the homeland. It calls on the sons of Iraq to stand up with a strong will and firm determination to face the treacherous sedition that seeks to destroy Iraq's national unity and its people's security after the military imperialist-Atlantic-Zionist aggression failed to affect the Iraqis' steadfastness, cohesion, and unity.

The National Assembly called upon the sons of our people, the people of the 1920 revolution, the people of Saddam's glorious Qadisiyah, to take a stand with a united will to bury this fierce conspiracy and be an impregnable shield before the attempts of the enemies and their destructive aides.

The National Assembly said the conspiracy led to a delay in passing the country's new Constitution which seeks to set new bases for democracy, beginning with the establishment of institutions stemming from this Constitution. The National Assembly blesses President Saddam Husayn's announcement in his historic speech of 16 March regarding the determination to build a democratic society built on the Constitution, law, institutions, and party pluralism.

The National Assembly discussed the circumstances and challenges Iraq is facing during its extraordinary session today.

The speaker of the National Assembly delivered a speech at the beginning of the session in which he hailed the steadfastness of the Iraqi people and their leader, President Saddam Husayn, in the face of the imperialist-Zionist-American conspiracy abetted by their allies.

He said the session had been held today while Iraq was confronting the last page of the conspiracy, a page that is being written by those parties known for their perfidy and treachery.

He added: At a time when your homeland has emerged from the confrontation with the Zionist aggression, those known for their perfidy were exploited as if they had acted in concert with the United States, which destroyed major projects. As for the remaining riffraff, those who abandoned all humanitarian norms and values and practiced the ugliest forms of sabotage and destruction, they were entrusted with desecrating honors and encroaching on sanctities.

The speaker said: It has transpired that Iran prepared large groups for such an act. It relied in its plan on two kinds of people. The first kind are those who were deported from Iraq in the early seventies for interfering in our domestic affairs. The second kind are POW's who succumbed for one reason or another under pressure during their captivity.

He said that the Iranian rulers specially prepared these groups and sent them into Iraq over a certain period of time, especially during the imposed war. These groups were helped by known people who are counted as the remnants of the agent groups. These people carried out acts of sabotage and looting.

The speaker noted that this riffraff committed criminal acts and looted public property, citizens' property, places of worship, food stores, medicine, and babies' milk. He said that if these groups were politically motivated, they would have protected the property and honor of the citizens and state because these installations and utilities belong to the people.

The speaker called on the members of the assembly to take part in explaining the facts to all the people, to help create a state of stability in the governorates where incidents have occurred, and to strengthen the citizens' confidence in themselves because confidence is the basic element for starting the new phase.

He added: We are before a phase in which we must fulfill our obligations to our people to bring about a democratic life and to build the citizen, who is a part of our people. We must build the citizen, inculcate correct values and ideals in him, and prevent him from harming himself through misconduct.

The assembly also unanimously approved during the emergency session a decision to abrogate its previous

decision adopted during the National Assembly sessions of 16 Muharram 1411 Hegira, corresponding to 7 August 1990, pertaining to the merger with Kuwait and all its subsequent effects.

President Saddam Husayn received a cable from the representatives of the Iraqi people expressing their support for his leadership, their backing of the measures taken by the leadership to confront the aggression against Iraq, and their denunciation of the acts of hooliganism, sedition, and sabotage which seek to undermine the people's unity.

Saddam Receives Shiite Spiritual Leader

NC2003210491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1750 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 Mar (INA)—His Excellency President Saddam Husayn has received His Eminence Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i [spiritual leader of Iraq's Shiite Muslims].

His Eminence Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i thanked God that He had enabled his excellency the president to quell the sedition. He prayed that God would exalt President Saddam in this world and the hereafter.

He stated that the mobs had not been forced into acting the way they had, but had been driven by covetousness for money or otherwise had scores to settle.

Noting that corpses were left lying in the street with no one daring to collect them for burial, his eminence wondered whether religion preached this kind of act. His eminence said that this was not remotely related to religion.

He recalled a statement he had issued in which he enjoined people not to kill, destroy, and rape, and noted the failure of the mobs to bury corpses left lying in the streets.

He added: I had some people remove the bodies, shroud them, and then bury them after reading prayers for their souls. His eminence said the mobs had wrecked two private cars of his.

Al-Khu'i Reportedly Arrested

LD2103105591 Tehran IRNA in English 0923 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 21, IRNA—The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) on Thursday announced that Iraqi security forces had arrested and transfered Grand Ayatollah Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i and a number of his associates from the holy city of Najaf to Baghdad.

In a statement issued here, SAIRI also claimed Iraqi government troops had used ground-to-ground missiles, napalm bombs and chemical weapons against people in Najaf, killing more than 15,000 persons and wounding thousands of others. The statement also called on all Islamic and international organizations to take immediate measures to stop Iraq's inhuman aggressions.

Saddam Meets Defense Minister, Intelligence Officer

NC2003171291 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Leader President Saddam Husayn today received Defense Minister Staff General Sa'di Tu'mah 'Abbas and the lieutenant general director of military intelligence.

Tribes Express 'Absolute' Allegiance to Saddam

NC1803120891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Baghdad, 18 Mar (INA)—The tribes of Iraq have renewed their absolute allegiance to President Saddam Husayn and their eagerness to defend great Iraq. The tribes expressed in cables to the president their support for his excellency to protect Iraq and safeguard its security and chaste soil.

One of the cables reads:

The torch lit by great Iraq through its struggle and steadfastness in the face of the strongest and largest hostile Western military alliance will remain a minaret for the Arabs and Muslims. Those scoundrels and the group of traitors and agents from among the so-called Arabs such as Hafiz [al-Asad], Fahd, and Husni were deluding themselves when they thought that our moon and sun would disappear, our palm trees would bow, and we would kneel down. We say to them: Shame on you, O failing ones. You are seeking the impossible. Our great Iraq is one banner. Saddam represents Iraq and Iraq represents Saddam.

We have grown up with your heroic and brave stand, enlightened thinking, and wise leadership.

In these days that are full of the spirit of challenge, steadfastness, and determination to confront the wicked imperialist and Zionist onslaught against the new Iraqi structure in terms of values, principles, and daring spirit that has been entrenched in our souls and minds, the large tribes and clans of al-Shujayri in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and the Arabian Peninsula declare their love, absolute allegiance, and firm belief with a spirit that prefers martyrdom to life with a strong will that believes in God and in serving your leadership. We all brandish swords to defend the Iraq of glory and civilization. Your banner, the banner of great Iraq, the Iraq of God-supported Saddam Husayn, will remain high, with God's help. May God preserve you as an asset and source of pride for the great Iraq.

May God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

[Signed] Shaykh Hamid al-Kazim al-Kashkul al-Shujayri, chieftain of the al-Shujayri tribes and clans in Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and the Arabian Peninsula.

A cable from the Albu 'Assaf tribe reads:

We, the faithful group of the al-Dulaym tribes, a subdivision of Albu 'Assaf, make the pledge of men with honor and faithfulness that stem from our true religion and the principles of our glorious Arab nation that, under your leadership we will protect our religion and chaste territory from all the coveters and infidels who are plotting against our resources and pride and from the desecration of this blessed land by the meanest creatures of God.

We pledge to God and pledge to you again that we will be at your command to carry arms to defend this dear and sacred soil, sacrificing our souls, money, and everything dear and precious for the sake of honor and dignity.

March with God's help and He will grant you a splendid victory O faithful leader. God will support the slave as long as the slave is with God.

May God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you.

[Signed] Muhammad Faris al-Dulaymi from the Albu 'Assaf tribe, Baghdad.

Following is another cable:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

We, the sons of al-Muhamidah tribe in the Governorate of al-Anbar, affirm our readiness to stand behind leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, who carried the banner of Allahu Akbar against the Zionist American enemy. We renew the pledge to his excellency to endure all difficulties and to stand on the side of his excellency for the sake of lofty Iraq, which is contending against the most difficult circumstances created by the reactionary and imperialist quarters. We are ready to sacrifice what is dear and precious—souls and money—and to remain faithful soldiers under his wise leadership.

May God grant you success in the service of the great Iraq.

[Signed] Khalid Yasin al-Muhammadi, the al-Mahamidah tribe in the al-Anbar Governorate. [passage omitted on similar cables signed by the sons of the Dallah tribe in al-Anbar Governorate and Suhayl 'Ali Al Fartus in the name of Al Fartus tribe in Baghdad]

Minister Urges Embargo End, Lists Sabotage Losses

NC2003212491 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1915 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 20 Mar (INA)—Muhammad Mahdi Salih, trade minister and acting finance minister, has called on the international community to lift the economic embargo against Iraq on humanitarian grounds. Speaking to reporters in Baghdad today, he called the economic blockade a conspiracy against the people and the very existence of Iraq.

He appealed for assistance, especially children's food and medicine, from specialized international and humanitarian agencies.

He said that the destruction of Iraq's reserves of food supplies by saboteurs marks the third chapter in the plot international quarters are executing against the people of Iraq in cooperation with imperialism and Zionism.

He said that the misguided sabotage completely destroyed the food stocks and children's milk secured by the Ministry of Trade, noting that the action is part of the plan imperialism and Zionism are executing against the Iraqi people.

The minister gave the following breakdown of food and other material looted or burned in the central and southern governorates: 715,027 tons of wheat; 61,191 tons of rice; 3,678 tons of fats; 40,281 tons of sugar; 272 tons of tea; 3,161 tons of children's milk; 3,025 tons of soap; and 8,091 tons of detergents.

Clandestine Radio Reports Latest News of Fighting

NC2003182491 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1450 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Battles are raging between the rebels and the authorities' henchmen in all parts of Iraq. In Karbala' and al-Najaf, the heroes of the popular uprising are confronting and defeating all the attacks by the criminal forces of the regime. This angered the criminals and they shelled the two cities with napalm and long-range missiles. This did not weaken the resolve of the fighters who doubled their resolve to defend the two towns.

In Karkuk, the rebels controlled most of the city areas after expelling Saddam's mercenaries. The mercenaries retaliated by using long-range artillery to shell the town because they were incapable of regaining control over it. Battles were still raging when this newscast was prepared.

Our fighters in 'Ali al-Gharbi and Shaykh Sa'd are consolidating their control over these towns which they liberated from the forces of the infidel regime. They destroyed great numbers of the Saddamist enemy forces which tried to regain control of these towns. The fighters are tightening their control over Jalula' and are pursuing the defeated remnants of the Saddamists.

In al-Basrah, our fighters are continuing their resistance to the forces that belong to criminal Saddam. The defeated remnants of the Saddam regime forces are living in a state of panic and fear in some of the al-Basrah areas as a result of the continuous rebel operations.

Battle Successes Against Government Troops Noted

NC2003185591 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1735 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Damascus, 20 Mar (SANA)—The operations of Iraq's popular uprising against the regime and its henchmen's (?brutal) practices against the sons of the Iraqi people continued today.

A source of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] said in a press statement that the Iraqi popular forces succeeded in seizing and establishing full control over the cities of Shaykh Sa'd, 'Ali al-Gharbi, Kumayt, and 'ali al-Sharqi, and that they seized large quantities of equipment and weapons left behind by the regime's forces.

The source added that the uprising forces yesterday captured Staff Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Jalil 'Abd-al-Hamid Muhsin al-Haydari, commander of the 4th Army Corps' 35th Division, and several members of his garrison in an ambush in the oil-rich (Bazkan) area.

The source added that the Iraqi regime, in its desperate maneuvers to contain the uprising, imposed martial law in the capital, Baghdad, and appointed military governors for al-Nasiriyah, al-Basrah, al-Kut, and the north.

He added that the popular forces executed the criminal Yunis al-Shahri, who is accused of arresting martyred Imam Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr in al-Najaf. Other forces broke down the gates of prisons and detention centers in several cities and released the detainees.

Iraqi refugees in Iran said that violent battles are taking place in al-Basrah and al-Tannumah and in areas near Baghdad, and that the regime is using phosphorous bombs and napalm. They reported that Irbil and al-Sulaymaniyah fell into the hands of the popular forces. [passage omitted]

Kurdish Radio Claims Control Over 'Whole' Karkuk

NC2003194091 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1745 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Our dear listeners, the crucial battle has been decided, the [words indistinct] battle has been decided. [Word indistinct] the rising masses, [words indistinct] and the rebellious armed men in the most splendid victory in the contemporary history of the Kurds and Kurdistan today over the whole Governorate of Karkuk in the following manner:

Control over the oil wells and [words indistinct], the center of the governorate, the headquarters of the 1st Army Corps command, the headquarters of the 2d [words indistinct], the headquarters of security and intelligence, the northern army command headquarters, radio and television, the air base, the helicopter airport, the missile base, the Karkuk lecture hall offices, and all the buildings and centers belonging to the Governorate of Karkuk.

We salute the rising Kurds from the [words indistinct] center of Kurdistan, the rebellious armed men, and the uprising revolutionaries. Salutations to the martyrs, salutations to the liberated homeland in a Nowruz [Persian for "spring"] glittering with the lights of great victory.

Kurds Congratulated on 'Liberation'

NC2003201491 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1725 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The following is a cable of congratulations from brother struggler (Mansuran Mustafa), assistant secretary general of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], to our heroic masses of the Kurdish people.

On the occasion of the liberation of the occupied city of Karkuk from the ugly Ba'thist rule, I congratulate our Kurdish people in Iraq and in all parts of Kurdistan on this great victory. This great deed has been realized only one day before the Nowruz by the peshmergas of the Kurdistan front and the armed revolutionaries and the people of the uprising. On this occasion, which is a historic day and a crowning of the Kurdish people's uprising in Iraq, we call on our nation to effect cohesion, close ranks, and preserve this great triumph with care and alertness. Congratulations, be happy with the liberation on Nowruz day.

Air Force Bombs Oil Wells

NC2003114991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1115 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus—In an appeal today, Jalal Talabani, one of the prominent leaders of the Iraqi opposition, said that after the liberation of the city of Karkuk yesterday, the Iraqi Air Force bombed oil wells in Karkuk and set them on fire. He added that the Iraqi opposition calls on the world to prevent the Iraqi dictatorship from continuing its plan to destroy the Iraqi people and their economy.

Talabani said this inhuman action by the Iraqi dictatorship contradicts all international norms and human rights. He stressed the need for quick interference by the international community so that the Halabjah tragedy will not be repeated in Karkuk and other Iraqi cities.

Talabani stressed that the Iraqi people's uprising will continue using all means until the dictatorship in Iraq is toppled, regardless of sacrifices.

Acid Dropped on Demonstrators

LD2103105991 Tehran IRNA in English 0846 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 21, IRNA—A leading Iraqi opposition group claimed on Thursday that government helicopters have dropped acid on people demonstrating against the Baghdad regime in Karkuk, killing a large number of them.

The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI), quoting its sources inside Iraq, said popular forces have managed to repair al-Sulaymaniyah's power station and get a firm hold on Karkuk airport. It also reported that pitched battles between government troops and people were going on in southern Mosul. It said the Republican Guards were barring any motor car from entering Mosul.

Rebels Capture General, Storm Al-Basrah Sheraton

NC2003205691 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1940 GMT 20 Mar 91 GMT 91

[Text] As the military establishment in the Baghdad military machine falls apart and the regime's services collapse one after another, our fighters have been able to capture the commander of the 20th infantry division, Staff Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Jalil 'Abd- al-Hamid Muhsin al-Haydari, and a number of other officers after our fighters attacked a military convoy on the road between al-'Amarah and Baghdad. A large number of troops from this division joined the uprising forces and the people's committees. Our armed forces, including elements from the Republican Guards, are now joining the ranks of the revolution.

The abovenamed commander confirmed reports we carried in our previous newscasts [words indistinct] and the death of the son of Culture and Information Minister Latif Nusayyif Jasim in the al-'Amiriyah shelter which came under American bombing. He said the shelter was reserved for senior government figures and officials in the departments of the unjust regime's establishments.

Our forces in al-Basrah have continued their heroic attacks on administrative establishments, concentrating on the dens of treason and corruption in this rebellious city. Our latest reports say that the people's resistance the day before yesterday stormed the Sheraton Hotel in al-Basrah where a great number of army and intelligence officers were hiding. Our fighters in the city were able to kill several henchmen of the authorities. The others fled but our fighters are pursuing the regime's mercenaries to end their existence in this steadfast town.

Baghdad-Al-Basrah Road Under Opposition Control

NC2103073691 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] The Iraqi popular forces have tightened their control of the Baghdad-al-Basrah road following fierce fighting with the regime's forces. A source at the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq has said that continuing clashes in al-Najaf, al- Diwaniyah, al-Samawah, and al-Basrah resulted in many casualties among the regime's forces and the destruction of many tanks and personnel carriers. The fighting also resulted in the martyrdom of several members of the popular forces. The source added that many civilians were martyred when sulphuric acid was dropped on Karkuk, which is controlled by the popular forces.

Spokesman Says Deserters Have Had 'Last Chance'

NC2003162491 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1540 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] A military spokesman has stated the following:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate:

The Revolution Command Council issued Resolutions No. 20 of 18 January 1991, No. 50 of 26 February 1991, No. 53 of 4 March 1991, and No. 73 of 16 March 1991, according to which the opportunity was given to deserters, absentees, and those who failed to report for military service to join their units. The grace period was extended many times in response to the turnout of deserters, absentees, and those who failed to report to military service in rejoining their units. It was also extended because available transportation facilities could not cope with the demand during the time afforded.

The grace period referred to above ended on 19 March 1991 and was the last chance given to the people described above.

Clergyman Discusses 'Sabotage' in Al-Najaf

NC1803102391 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Interview with Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, an 'Allamah and member of the religious seminary in al-Najaf Governorate, by an unidentified correspondent; date and place not given—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Correspondent] Welcome.

[Al-Sadr] Thank you.

[Correspondent] Al-Sayyid Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr: You have seen several criminal acts committed by the deviating groups. Could you tell us about them?

[Al-Sadr] As a resident of al-Najaf, I have seen many of the acts that the gentleman [the correspondent] is referring to. I saw bodies in the streets [words indistinct]. I saw several cars burned. I saw several buildings that had been deliberately set on fire. I saw a large quantity of weapons and ammunition that had been stolen and food and supplies looted from warehouses. I saw government property—chairs, tables, books, and similar items—that had been stolen and distributed among an unspecified number of people; people who have no (?humanity), religion, or conscience.

[Correspondent] I am sorry for interrupting, could you tell us who these deviating groups are?

[Al-Sadr] As far as I know, they are mobs who are absolutely unknown within the society. None of them stands out as a person with any social standing or position. They are all anonymous persons whose names and backgrounds are unknown. It is clear that they are

not from al-Najaf, but from other governorates, who have assembled from here and there for the purpose of committing acts of sabotage, to cause instability, and change social conditions for the worse.

[Correspondent] What about the statement you made at the time in support of this faction?

[Al-Sadr] I regret that during the unfortunate and painful ten days that we experienced during the chaos in the [words indistinct] after six days entered this man, who considers himself a leader of what he claims to be an Islamic revolution, accompanied by a number of gunmen. Under force of arms, he demanded that I [word indistinct] and write my name in his deviating and [word indistinct] movement. Naturally, I was compelled to [word indistinct] such statement. Whatever I said in this statement, it was under threat and I am truly (?unaware) of any of its contents and my conscience is clear of its contents.

[Correspondent] You are a well-known clergyman and a member of the religious seminary; what do you think of these criminal acts?

[Al-Sadr] No conscience, religion, or society could tolerate any part, not to say all, of what has happened in terms of murders, lootings, [words indistinct] and the social chaos and [word indistinct]. All these acts are naturally (?unacceptable) under any religion, world, or society. We want perfection, good management, good leadership, welfare, and security for Iraq, and what has happened definitely goes against all these things. So, in this respect, these are deplorable acts in part and parcel and make absolutely no sense at all. We hope that Iraq and the [word indistinct] Iraqi leadership will rebuild what was destroyed, recover what was plundered, and restore law and order, which it has already begun to do, thank God Almighty. I pray that God grants us success in this, and I hope that no troublemaker, [word indistinct] gunman, or anarchist will remain, so that society will be stable, welfare will prevail, and people can feel secure about themselves, their property, and their honor. This is necessary at all times. God willing, this will happen and the Iraqi Government and leadership will succeed in bringing it about. This is what we all wish for our beloved Iraq. [passage omitted]

Bakr Al-Hakim Interviewed on Future Government

AU1903084391 Vienna PROFIL in German
18 Mar 91 p 49

[Interview with Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, chairman of the "Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq," by Bahram Gharedaghi "over telephone and telefacsimile;" place and date not given: "No Second Iran"]

[Text] Exiled in Tehran, Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, 56, is chairman of the "Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq," one of the three most important Iraqi Shiite parties. Because of his calls for a revolution against the regime of Saddam Husayn, numerous members of his family were killed on orders of the Iraqi president. In the event of a victory by the opposition, Bakr al-Hakim would be a candidate for the presidency. Yet, other members of the Iraqi opposition consider the Islamic scholar to be "controlled by the Iranians."

[Gharedaghi] Even before the battle of Kuwait there was talk of an organized uprising in Iraq, which was to begin immediately after the war. Who stood behind that?

[Hakim] The national uprising in southern and central Iraq as well as in the north, where our suppressed Kurdish brothers are leading the fight, has been spontaneous and is the natural continuation of former uprisings. Through their contacts with the population in Iraq, even foreign journalists learned that the people can no longer support Saddam and want to overthrow him. The uprising is headed by Iraqis in Iraq. They planned it and set up committees to organize this uprising. It is a popular movement. Nobody outside Iraq played a role in preparing this uprising. As soon as the news about the uprising reached us we declared our solidarity and promised our support. We ask God to ensure the triumph of this uprising and crown our service for this cause with success.

[Gharedaghi] It has been said that Iran is playing an important role in connection with this unrest?

[Hakim] All those who suspect another country or certain groups behind it are wrong or are planning a conspiracy against us. We have repeatedly stated that since the cease-fire between Iran and Iraq and the recognition of UN Resolution 598, Iran stopped military support to the Shiites, who were driven away from Iraq, and what was left of the Iraqi opposition, because Iran accepted and thus respects the UN resolution. Another reason for the incorrect assessment has to do with my personal close relations with the Iranian population; these links reach back 20 years, when many Iranians were in contact with my father, Imam Mohsen Hakim, and recognized him as their religious leader. Finally, this misunderstanding has also been created because I am linked to the Iraqi people, who are conducting the uprising, in a cordial relationship.

[Gharedaghi] Will the future Iraqi Government proclaim an Islamic republic modelled on Iran?

[Hakim] Iraq has very distinctive characteristics, which rules out copying a certain government system; neither will Iraq ask for the protection of another country. More than 70 percent of the Iraqi population are Muslims. Two large nations, the Arabs and Kurds, as well as minorities such as the Turkmen were exposed to suppression. In the past 100 years there has never been a conflict between Shiites and Sunnis, the two major religious groups in the country; the two groups always had good relations. Moreover, in Iraq there are also nationalist and left-wing parties that share our position as far as the country's liberation from Saddam's regime, the respect for Islam, and minority rights are concerned.

We think—I think—that it is important for us to win freedom and bring our Islamic state in line with human rights as established by the United Nations. That is my personal view. Ultimately, it will be the people who will have the final say in the future, which is what we want. Last December various groups and parties of all directions signed a joint document that stated freedom and independence as its objective.

[Gharedaghi] What is your relationship with Iraq's other neighbors?

[Hakim] In a letter to King Fahd, I invited him to assert his responsibility for the protection of the population of his neighboring country. Our nation expects Saudi Arabia to interfere in order to prevent more bloodshed and the destruction of what is left in Iraq. I informed King Fahd, President Gorbachev, and President Rafsanjani, as well as King Husayn, the amir of Kuwait, President Al-Asad, and President Ozal that, generally, we respect the will of the Iraqi people, who will call for peace, security, and independence in the region. Now Saudi Arabia and other states can gain our friendship by helping us remove Saddam and prevent further crimes.

[Gharedaghi] What kind of relations would you like to have with the West if you defeat Saddam?

[Hakim] The future Iraqi Government will have good and well-balanced relations, relations that are aimed at mutual interests with all its neighbors and other countries. Iraq will try to play an important role in establishing security for the community of peoples. We will have positive relations with the West because we believe that it is unnatural and unreasonable to keep away from the community of peoples.

[Gharedaghi] What is the situation like in Iraq at this moment? Do you think that the insurgents will be able to defeat Saddam's Republican Guards, which seem to still be intact?

[Hakim] The insurgents have full control over al-Basrah and al-'Amarah as well as over several Kurdish cities in the north. Many members of the Republican Guard have joined the ranks of the people in al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, and Pol-el-Kahla. Saddam will not manage to sow the seeds of discord among the ranks of the military, which consists of the children of our nation. The Republican Guards are part of the military, which, in turn, are part of the nation. I expect a declaration of solidarity by large parts of the military and the Republican Guard. I believe in God and put my trust in Him. These are not just empty words. We have learned that a nation which has sacrificed so many martyrs to God will not be satisfied with anything less than the departure of Saddam and the establishment of the will of the people.

Opposition Leaders Discuss Unity, Saddam's Regime

NC1703162591 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1850 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Interview with Shaykh Muhammad Jawad al-Khalisi, representative of the Islamic Current; Burj Shawis, member of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan; and Dr. Mubdir al-Wayyis, secretary general of the Socialist Party in Iraq by an unidentified correspondent in Beirut —date not given]

[Correspondent] This is the first time the historic goal has joined all the forces of various currents and affiliations. What do you have to say about these forces' meeting in light of the popular uprising in Iraq?

[Al-Khalisi] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate, and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad and his mujahidin family and followers. Iraq is a country of surprises, if it may be said. It is a country of surprises in terms of its reality and its long, deep-rooted history. In Iraq, there are different forces and trends. The problem, in our view, has been diverting the reality of the Iraqi people by some forces. This has led to the fragmentation of the Iraqi opposition's work as a whole. Efforts have been made to unify all factions of the opposition based on adherence to the Iraqi people and their doctrine, thought, and education and on the sacred message being carried by Muslims and Arabs in particular as a direct responsibility resulting from the revelation of the message in their language. These efforts have succeeded, may God be praised, and the Iraqi opposition has overcome past tragedies and suspicions and held a meeting based on the need to recognize the Iraqi identity in light of Iraq's culture and doctrine and to support and defend the Iraqi people. There is a special matter that many people do not imagine, experience, or understand. What is taking place in Iraq is a large-scale massacre, which began from the time Iraq was first controlled by the regime of dictator Saddam Husayn. Today, the opposition is meeting under the slogan of loyalty to the Iraqi people and their doctrines, thought, and courageous uprising and movement, which has exceeded all expectations. The Iraqi people today are confronting the regime's tanks with their blood and sweat. Children who are only 13 or 14 years old are attacking tanks in the city of al-Basrah. The Iraqis' slogan in al-Basrah, Kurdistan, Mosul, al-Ramadi, Baghdad, the south, al-Najaf, and Karbala' calls for one revolution and a perpetual popular revolution to get rid of injustice and free the people from that regime, which is viewed as a stain on the history of Iraq, the region, Islam, and the Arabs. It is also a stain on the history of mankind. Those who supported Saddam's regime for one day are responsible for that support. If they repent, we will welcome them. But they must apologize to Iraq's people for their previous positions. This uprising will certainly continue, and every area in Iraq will rise up to eliminate this injustice so that Iraq can restore its Arab, Muslim, and human face and play its Arab, Islamic, and human role in peace, love, and brotherhood. This is the Iraq of civilizations, guidance,

good, love, and peace and not the Iraq of Saddam Husayn, destruction, torture, and terrorism.

[Correspondent] Comrade Burj Shawis, member of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and head of the party's delegation to the first Iraqi opposition conference in Beirut. What do you say on this occasion about the importance of this conference in strengthening the alliance among various Iraqi forces in connection with the continuing popular uprising in more than one area and city in Iraq?

[Shawis] The conference is being held at a very important time as the sweeping popular uprising continues all over Iraq: In the south and the center and spreading to the (Qurusan) Mountains. In fact, the conference includes all effective opposition forces in the Iraqi arena in addition to forces working outside the homeland. From this angle, we view the conference as important and sensitive. There is a movement to support the Iraqi people and the uprising in particular through the unification of the opposition. All parties in the opposition are meeting at this conference and they represent the view of the various religious, sectarian, and ethnic groups in Iraq.

Therefore, this conference's resolutions represent the real view of the Iraqi people. From this platform, I would like to appeal to all the friendly forces to consider this conference a vehicle representing the Iraqi people's view and brave uprising. What has taken place at the conference so far is a great victory for the Iraqi opposition, which represents the unanimity of all forces on the need to topple the dictatorial regime and allow the Iraqi people to choose the system that can represent them and their freedom, and achieve the legitimate democratic rights of the Kurdish people in Iraq's Kurdistan. These common denominations represent the minimum demands of all sections of the Iraqi people. We believe the conference is successful because of its discussions. We note with pleasure and satisfaction that views were in agreement and that we spoke the same language. It is no secret that the Iraqi political arena is like a mosaic, with various colors of a political society that also has many colors and trends. So, we consider this similarity of views and this common language a great gain for the Iraqi people.

[Correspondent] Dr. Mubdir al-Wayyis, secretary general of the Socialist Party in Iraq, you say that the current Iraqi regime has no precedent in any country in the world in terms of its fascism and terrorism. You specialize in law and criminal law. What are the main crimes committed by Saddam Husayn against the state, the people, and society in Iraq.

[Al-Wayyis] Regarding this regime, no concept of justice has ever prevailed in Iraq for several reasons: First, there is no specific legal way to charge any person with a crime. Haphazard arrests are made and the special courts mete out illegal, unfair, and harsh sentences against defendants. In addition, the legislative authority is not separated from the executive authority.

[Correspondent] What is the importance of this conference to the activity of the Iraqi opposition, including the national currents, one branch of which you represent?

[Al-Wayyis] This conference was prepared for a long time ago, and it includes, in general, the political currents in Iraq. It includes the Islamic, pan-Arab, Kurdish, and democratic currents. So, it includes all the political forces in Iraq. In addition to all the political currents in Iraq, the conference was attended by many Iraqi brothers in exile representing Iraqi national figures in Europe, some of whom also attended the conference. The speeches were objective and called for the unification of the opposition factions. They all stress the need to establish a democratic regime, reject the dictatorial regime, and establish a state of law and legitimate institutions. Otherwise, our country will suffer from future dictatorial regimes. Therefore, all the forces that attended call for establishing a new system in Iraq on the basis of democracy and establishing a state of institutions and law, that is; a state of law to which the rulers will submit. We hope we will succeed at this conference. The political party members and the educational and scientific figures whom I met want to achieve that demand in Iraq in the future. In addition, we are trying to prevent any future tendency to impose hegemony. In fact, our country has been destroyed. Therefore, we cannot rebuild that country without stability, which should prevail under a democratic regime and with the implementation of law.

[Correspondent] Thank you.

[Al-Wayyis] Thank you.

U.S. Defense Ministry Camouflages 'Severe' Losses

NC1703164991 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 14 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Beginning of Confession, Beginning of Truth"]

[Text] A U.S. War Ministry spokesman has announced that the United States lost 76 aircraft during its treacherous aggression against Iraq.

While reviewing daily statements by the U.S. command in the Arabian peninsula and the Arabian Gulf on the course of the aggressive military operations against Iraq and the losses of the U.S. forces, it appears that this number is very high when compared to the losses it used to admit.

Taken into consideration that the number admitted by the U.S. War Ministry two weeks after fighting is only a part of the losses inflicted by our brave armed forces, the extent of the U.S. Administration's misleading, deception, lies, evasion, and media camouflage of losses,

within the framework of its constant policy to mislead public opinion, is revealed. This policy aims at misleading the U.S. public in particular and confiscating and forging its awareness, in addition to showing great Iraq and its brave armed forces as being unable to confront the U.S. machinery, inflict huge losses on it, and prevent it from attaining its evil objectives.

There is no doubt that more hidden facts and camouflaged information will find its way to the public regardless of how the U.S. War Ministry and its media organs continue to mislead, lie, deceive, and evade. These means have become widely known since the first hours of the treacherous aggression against Iraq, and through the lies of the daily military statements on the extent of the destruction inflicted upon the brave Iraqi forces, Iraq's military and economic capabilities, and its lofty construction.

The war has proven this clear fact. The U.S. Administration has no reason or justification to continue to ban journalists and families of U.S. soldiers from reaching the U.S. Dover Air Force Base where the bodies of U.S. soldiers killed in the treacherous aggressive war against Iraq are kept. It continues to do so despite repeated objections by U.S. journalists and the American Civil Liberties Union to this unjustifiable ban. The only reason this ban is in force is so that the U.S. War Ministry can camouflage the severe losses inflicted upon its forces and machinery. The administration fears that its lies and misleading will be revealed.

However, facts are stubborn like rocks and cannot be forged or evaded. The administration of war criminal Bush or his War Ministry, regardless of their propaganda means and organs and capabilities for lies and hypocrisy, cannot but admit the actual magnitude of the human and material losses afflicted upon them due to the treacherous aggression against our great Iraq.

U.S. public opinion must be exposed to the full truth, that which the administration of war criminal Bush tries to present to them gradually and in doses out of its fear of the terrible shock that will befall them due to those loses. The others who were dragged by the current of the U.S. Administration's aggression and behind its evil aggressive inclinations will realize that the price of the aggression against Iraq was more severe than they imagined.

With the lapse of time and the succession of more confessions by the U.S. War Ministry on the material and human losses of its forces, U.S. and world public opinion will realize the lies, hypocrisy, evasion, misleading, and deception characterizing the administration of war criminal George Bush. They will also realize that these vile characteristics are only an expression of the nature of the imperialist regime, its evil aggressive inclinations, and evil means to impose hegemony and influence and violate all that is just, right, equitable, legitimate, legal, and moral. The confrontation of great Iraq, its proud people, and heroic Army to the aggression and its evil and corrupt smybols is a reflection of Iraq's belief in freedom, sovereignty, and independence. Moreover, Iraq's sacrifices in expressing this belief as it confronted the evil U.S.-Zionist-Atlantic alliance will enlighten the path in front of all free nations and peoples that struggle for the sake of more security, peace, and freedom in the world.

Arens Asserts Golan 'Inseparable Part' of State

TA2003144091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1400 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens has said that despite the U.S. declaration rejecting the Golan Law, Israel remains bound to its decision and will implement it. The Golan Heights constitutes an inseparable part of the state.

Our correspondent Mira Amsalem reports that Defense Minister Arens spoke at the commercial club in Jerusalem and confirmed that approximately one month before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, he had left for Washington, accompanied by the heads of the Mosad and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Intelligence Branch to warn U.S. Secretary of Defense Cheney of the danger posed by Iraq.

As for the possibility of Israeli military intervention during the Gulf war, Arens admitted that toward the end of the war he was close to believing that the IDF would participate. At the time, he had estimated that the threat to the coalition that could have resulted from an Israeli operation was steadily decreasing and that there was no longer any danger that the overflight of a neighboring country by Israeli aircraft could disrupt the handling of the war. Soon, however, the war ended.

Interviewed on Syria Negotiations

TA2003185891 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 1800 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens this afternoon told the Jerusalem Economics Club that the Golan Heights is an integral part of the State of Israel, and that the latest American statement about not recognizing the Golan Heights Law is nothing new. But later he told reporter Harley Braidman that Israel is prepared for negotiations with Syria.

[Begin recording] [Arens] There is certainly room for a settlement, and I hope that we are going to see a change in the Syrian position. Maybe the fact that they were members of the coalition and, in effect, were on the same side as Israel during this war, will bring about a change of policy in Damascus. We hope so.

[Braidman] How do you see such a development occurring? In direct talks?

[Arens] In direct talks. All al-Asad has to do is to let us know that he is ready to sit down and talk to us; it does not matter where, does not matter when.

[Braidman] Arens also said that in the Gulf war crisis, he was close to deciding on Israeli military intervention against the Scud missile sites, but the war ended first.

Iraq had not lost its capability of launching missiles against Israel, even though the likelihood of doing so was minimal, he said, because it would lead to the resumption of war. Arens added that the Arrow antimissile missile would provide Israel with full defense coverage.

He also showed some optimism regarding Israeli hostages in Lebanon.

[Arens] We have received no indication at all, but nevertheless, the very fact that there are indications that the Iranians are ready to deal with the question of hostages and POW's and MIA's is a little sign that there is room for a little bit of optimism that maybe we are getting closer to bringing our boys back home. [end recording]

Cheney Remarks Called Part of 'Political Pressure'

TA2003165391 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Report by army affairs correspondent Amir Fink]

[Text] All of Israel, but mainly the defense establishment, today tried to understand the timing of U.S. Defense Secretary Cheney's remarks about Israel's need for new weapons. The most widespread assumption is that his remarks were part of the total political pressure on Israel. The emphasis, said Israeli sources, is on the timing of the successive statements: Boucher's statement on the Golan Heights and Cheney's on the decreasing threat to Israel and its consequently smaller defense needs.

This week, Lieutenant General Dan Shomron, the chief of staff, said that there would be no option other than cutting the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] in certain fields. Senior defense establishment elements said that although the short-range threat to Israel appears to have decreased, the Gulf war exposed the current generation of weapons and, consequently, countries in the region are liable to launch an arms race in a bid to jump to the next generation.

The sources added, however, that the defense establishment will have to present, within the next six months, a list of development projects that can be canceled.

The defense sources also said that, although the short-range threat is minor, in the long range, the Arab countries came out of the Gulf war with new military wisdom. Israel, therefore, should not stop its arms procurement process.

Dani Nave, the defense minister's media adviser, says that, presently, Israel is not dealing with the issue of U.S. defense aid. Next year's aid has been approved, as has the $650 million supplementary aid. Therefore, he said, he does not understand what the fuss is all about.

U.S.-PLO Dialogue To Resume 'Next Month'

TA2003171091 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 18 Mar 91 p 1

[Text] AL-MANAR has learned that the U.S. Administration is finding itself obliged to resume dialogue with the PLO. The dialogue was suspended in the wake of the attack by armed men on the Israeli coast in May 1990. The step toward "resumption" came after the meeting at the end of last week between U.S. President George Bush and French President Francois Mitterrand. Citing informed sources, AL-MANAR affirms that President Mitterrand reminded President Bush that it is impossible to find an alternative to the PLO. Consequently, a quick resumption of dialogue will aid the peace process, as well as efforts and moves exerted for its success.

Those sources told AL-MANAR that the resumption of dialogue will take place in the first 10 days of next month and that a new team from the Palestinian side will be appointed by President Yasir 'Arafat to this dialogue.

Baker Jerusalem Talks Detailed; Frayj Comments

PM2003155491 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Mar 91 pp 1, 4

[Zaki Shihab report: "Details of Most Important U.S.-Palestinian Meeting in 15 Years"]

[Text] AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Bethlehem's mayor, Ilyas Frayj, has described the meeting between Palestinian figures and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in occupied Jerusalem last week as the most important meeting between Palestinian figures and a U.S. secretary of state in 15 years.

In a statement to AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT, Frayj said that the United States and other Western states are serious about securing a solution to the Palestinian issue following the success in implementating the will of international law in the Gulf region.

Frayj revealed details of the meeting held at the home of the U.S. consul in Jerusalem, Philip Wilcox, with Faysal al-Husayni, Sa'ib 'Urayqat, Zahirah Kamal, Hanan 'Ashrawi, Mustafa al-Natshah, Furayh Abu-Madian, Khalil Mahshi, Haydar 'Abda-al-Shafi (in addition to Ilyas Furayj) lasting an hour and a half. He said that U.S. Secretary of State Baker began the talks—which were attended by John Kelly, the State Department official in charge of Middle Eastern affairs; Dennis Ross, State Department director of the Policy Planning Staff; and Margaret Tutweiler, State Department spokeswoman—by reviewing the results of his visits to a number of states in the region and his resulting impression that these states are dissatisfied with the PLO and its leadership's position on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Baker asked whether the Palestinian figures meeting with him were willing to join the peace process without the present PLO leadership.

Faysal al-Husayni spoke next. He started by explaining the Palestinian issue and its developments. He said that the meeting was being held after all those present had received permission from the PLO to hold the meeting. Al-Husayni pointed out that the Palestinians were anxious to see international laws applied everywhere, especially on their territory, where the suffering has continued for decades.

He also broached the subject of the suspension of the U.S.-PLO dialogue, expressing the Palestinian participants' willingness to help to restore it. The U.S. secretary of state gave no clear answer to that. He criticized Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's policy and support for Saddam Husayn. He said that, even after the war was over, 'Arafat continued to talk about Iraq as though it were the victor.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat spoke next, taking from his pocket a document bearing a "State of Palestine" letterhead. He said that it was the order to hold the meeting, which the participants had had to await before holding the meeting.

Having reviewed recent events in the Gulf region, Dr. 'Urayqat asked what would the United States do if Israel refused to withdraw from the territories that it occupies. The U.S. secretary of state replied: "We have a historic opportunity for peace and we will not pressure anyone. We want the process to be conducted through persuasion."

Next Dr. 'Urayqat reminded Secretary Baker of his statement that the dialogue with the PLO had been abolished, so Baker said that he meant to say that is was "suspended."

Next Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi spoke about Israel's continued construction of settlements and the threat that this posed to the peace process. He reminded the U.S. secretary of state of his statement that the construction of settlements was an obstacle to peace. He asked him: Why does the United States not apply pressure on to stop it. Baker said that he was continuing his pressures in that regard. He also mentioned the fact that U.S. aid was being suspended until he obtained guarantees that it would not be used to construct settlements.

Next Ilyas Frayj said that, as mayor of Bethlehem, he wanted to see the United States reopen its dialogue with the PLO, because the PLO and Israel are the foundation of any talks designed to achieve real peace.

The mayor of Bethlehem raised the subject of Jerusalem. He said that the holy city's future must be subject to negotiations, because the residents of Bethlehem, Christ's birthplace, are aware of its importance as a center of the revealed religions. He added that the city was occupied when the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights were occupied. Baker replied that the United States realizes that in order to achieve peace land must be given to the Palestinians in return for peace with Israel.

Ilyas Frayj added: "I have been mayor of Bethlehem for over 20 years, and, despite that, I was forced to obtain a five-hour permit to attend the meeting with you, because of the curfew."

Ilyas Frayj and the other Palestinian figures thanked U.S. President Bush for his recent statement on exchanging land for peace and his efforts to implement international law. They told him that inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip represent only 25 percent of the Palestinian people. As for the PLO, it represents the entire Palestinian people.

They explained to Baker the conditions of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, especially their economic conditions, the marketing of their produce, and unemployment, which at one point reached 90 percent. On top of this there is the difficulty of transferring money from abroad, the education conditions, and people detained without a trial. He promised to raise these points, making some notes about them.

Meanwhile, an authoritative Palestinian source in Amman has emphasized that contacts and consultations are being conducted among Palestinian figures in the PLO regarding the possibility of holding an extraordinary Palestine National Council session in Amman.

The source said that the council, which will convene as soon as possible, will discuss all issues and developments on the Arab scene—and particularly the Palestinian scene—especially after the end of the Gulf war. The council will also discuss the U.S. and international move designed to find a peaceful solution to the Palestinian issue. The council will also review the results of the meeting in Jerusalem between the Palestinian figures and the U.S. secretary of state.

Egypt Denies Palestinian-Israeli 'Mediator' Role

TA2003154691 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Muhammad Basyuni, Egyptian ambassador to Israel, believes that the United States is currently formulating clear and comprehensive estimates for peace in our region. The time for resolutions, however, can only come at a later stage.

Ambassador Basyuni, speaking to our correspondent Bassam Jabir, denied that Egypt was serving as a mediator between Israel and the Palestinians and said that Cairo feels that the Palestinians are free to choose their own representatives.

Officials Say Egypt Plans To Invite Levi

TA2103082991 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 21 Mar 91 p 1

[Report by diplomatic correspondent David Makovsky and AP]

[Excerpt] Egypt is planning to invite Foreign Minister David Levi to Cairo, in an effort to ascertain whether this Likud government is serious about peace, Egyptian officials say.

Levi would be the first Likud official to be invited to Egypt since when foreign minister Moshe Arens held talks in Cairo in February, 1989. The last cabinet minister to visit Egypt was then defense minister Yitzhaq Rabin who held talks with President Husni Mubarak in September of that year.

"We are definitely going to invite Levi, and it may happen as soon as a month from now. Nothing is set yet, but he will be the first one to come. There is a golden opportunity now to make peace. We want to know if the Israeli government really means peace or not. With experience of last year's peace process falling apart due to Israel, it is impossible for us to accept gimmicks," one Egyptian official said.

The official was particularly upset about Prime Minister Shamir's statement this week that he has no intention to negotiate with the 10 Palestinians from the territory who met last week with Secretary of State James Baker. [passage omitted]

Shomrom Tours Lebanese Security Zone, Comments

TA2103113191 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] An IDF [Israel Defense Forces] unit killed two terrorists and injured another this morning, north of the security zone in south Lebanon. Our forces sustained no injuries. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that, while on a routine patrol, a Golani Brigade unit spotted and opened fire on the terrorists, who were riding in a Mercedes. Two terrorists were killed and another was injured. They belonged to Hizballah.

Major General Yosi Peled, commander of the Northern Command, stressed that Israel has no intention of leaving the security zone as long as the situation does not allow it. He noted that the area north of the security zone is under the authority of the South Lebanese Army [SLA], but Hizballah people are still in it.

Chief of Staff Dan Shomron toured the northern border this morning and said that Israel's presence bears security significance on the Golan as well as at any location where we face an army or a country in a state of war with us. According to him, territory is very important in such situations. He added that as long as Syria is trying to attain strategic parity with Israel, it poses a threat to us. He noted that today, however, Syria is more isolated, because it has lost Iraq's strategic backing and the Soviet aerial umbrella. Nevertheless, Syria continues to arm itself, and this armament is worrisome.

Our army affairs correspondent reports that the chief of staff came to bid farewell to the Northern Command. He watched a firing exercise on the Golan and met with SLA Commander Antoine Lahd.

Prisoner Exchange Deal Reaches 'Advanced Stage'

TA2003171691 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic 18 Mar 91 p 2

[Text] AL-MANAR has learned that talks are currently under way in a Scandinavian capital between five parties—the United States, Iran, Syria, and Britain [four countries, as published]—with the aim of concluding a prisoner exchange deal that would involve Westerners, Israelis, Iranians, and Lebanese. These talks have reached an advanced stage and will be made public within the next few days. A number of Iranians detained in the United States and Western Europe as well as Lebanese languishing in Israeli jails, including Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd, in addition to Israelis being held by Shiite groups sponsored by Syria and Iran will be released within the framework of the deal. U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Britain's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs discussed some elements of this deal during their recent visit to the Syrian capital.

PDS Delegation Visits Israel, Meets Peres

LD2003092991 Berlin ADN in German 0144 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Tel Aviv (ADN)—A delegation of the Party for Democratic Socialism [PDS] led by its chairman, Gregor Gysi, had a meeting at the beginning of the week in Tel Aviv with Israeli Labor Party Head Shim'on Peres, who explained among other things the stance of his party on the solution of social problems in the country. Peres announced that his party will establish contacts with the PDS and with other East German parties.

As revealed by a press statement from the party, during his meeting with the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Gysi spoke of the responsibility of the PDS to consistently resist all national-socialist, xenophobic, and anti-semitic tendencies. Netanyahu demanded that Jews and Germans should jointly retain the memory of the holocaust. During the talks, he expressly supported meetings between as many young people as possible from Israel and the eeastern German laender.

During its stay, the delegation also met with representatives of trade unions, the International Center for Peace in the Middle East, and the Israeli-German Association. [passage omitted]

Aeroflot Inaugurates Tel Aviv-Riga Flight

TA2003200191 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1700 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The Soviet national airline Aeroflot today inaugurated a charter flight connection between Riga and Tel Aviv. At a reception at Ben-Gurion Airport, the guests from Latvia stressed that the air link should be seen as an expression of Latvia's struggle for independence.

An Aeroflot Tupolev brought 150 passengers, mostly Jews, who came to visit their relatives in Israel.

State Budget Vote May Cause Government Crisis

TA2003170391 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Talk between announcers Mikha Friedman in the studio and Yaron Deqel at the Knesset—live]

[Excerpt] [Deqel] A coalition crisis has been under way since 1300 today. The Likud is having difficulties in passing the state budget as a result of the opposition of what, for the Likud, are currently the weak links: the NRP [National Religious Party] and Tzomet. The latter is stubbornly adhering to its position against endorsing the special allocations [for ultraorthodox institutions which are part of the budget proposal]. It will vote for the budget, but not for the special allocations.

The prime minister's announcement that every minister who fails to support the budget or one of its clauses will be fired, did nothing to change Agriculture Minister Refa'el Eytan's stance.

The situation is somewhat different with the NRP. The Likud tried to offer the NRP funds—5 million shekels—in return for that party's support for the special allocations, but to this hour, the NRP has refused to cooperate.

It should be stressed that, at present, the government's integrity is not threatened, and that the issue lies in the difficulty of passing the state budget. A government cannot function without a state budget, and a majority for the budget means a vote of confidence in the government.

[Friedman] Did not Yitzhaq Shamir tell the two rebellious parties—the NRP and Tzomet—in so many words: Dear friends, if you do not give your aye to what, for me, is an important issue, as far as I am concerned, you can go home, scram, quit the government?

[Deqel] Yes, and that is why there is fear that a government crisis will erupt if those two parties persist in their refusal. It should be stressed, however, that negotiations with the NRP and the ultraorthodox parties have been held throughout the past hours in an attempt to solve the problem. The Likud believes that Tzomet is a lost case, as far as its stand on the allocations goes. [passage omitted]

[Reporting on the difficulty in passing the state budget, Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1600 GMT on 20 March adds: "Our correspondent Ze'ev Kohen has learned that Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir does not oppose holding early elections. The Labor Party's position on this matter is currently being probed. Our correspondent notes that Knesset Member [MK] Eli

Dayan is looking into the matter with Labor Party Chairman MK Shim'on Peres, who is currently overseas.

["Earlier, Agriculture Minister Refa'el Eytan said that early elections are now called for, even if the step is inconvenient for the large parties. Eytan stressed that his party, Tzomet, would abide by its principles and vote against the allocation of special funds."]

Shamir, NRP Compromise on Special Allocations

TA2003212491 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2010 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] In a meeting between Prime Minister Shamir, Ministers Nisim and Moda'i, and Knesset Member Sara Doron with representatives of NRP [National Religious Party], a compromise was reached according to which the NRP will receive a special allocation of 9.5 million shekels.

At the moment, Minister Moda'i is meeting with representatives of Agudat Yisra'el, SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim], and Degel Hatora, in an attempt to persuade them to endorse the compromise with the NRP. Minister Der'i [from SHAS] refused to attend the meeting.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 2100 GMT on 20 March reports that "the Knesset plenum has again dispersed in order to allow the Finance Committee to discuss the compromise agreement between the prime minister and NRP." The report adds that "only after a resolution is made in the Finance Committee, will the Knesset plenum reconvene to discuss the budget."]

Arab Stabs Two at Bus Stop in Central Israel

TA2103074391 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0730 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] About an hour ago, an Arab stabbed two men at a bus stop in central Hod Hasharon. Updated reports from Me'ir Hospital in Kefar Sava indicate that one of the men suffered slight wounds and the other was moderately injured. The assailant was captured. He suffered moderate wounds after being beaten at the site.

Municipal Official Murdered in Territories

TA2003194591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Excerpts] An Arab motorist attempted to run over an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldier at a roadblock near the village of Shuwaykah. The soldier, who was not hurt, shot and injured his assailant. Our correspondent Arye Gus reports that the injured driver was taken to Rafidiyah Hospital.

Ramzi Ayadah Barbach, a municipal official from Khan Yunus in the Gaza Strip, was murdered by masked men on suspicion of collaborating with the authorities. [passage omitted]

Dozens of residents from the territories were arrested this week in the Dan District for staying there without a permit and thus violating the conditions of their reemployment. The arrested men will be turned over to the military authorities and prosecuted in their areas of residency.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in English at 1800 GMT on 20 March reports: "At the al-Ram junction north of Jerusalem, an Arab was shot in the stomach this afternoon. He was taken to Hadassah 'En- Kerem Hospital, where he is said to be in serious condition. Police are investigating the circumstances of the incident."]

Hadera Man Killed; 'Nationalistic' Motive Suspected

TA2003190491 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1830 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] A resident of Hadera was stabbed to death this evening by an Arab. The police believe that the murder was due to nationalistic motives. The murdered man, who owned a store, entered the store's warehouse with the Arab client, where he was stabbed to death. The murderer fled the scene. The police are currently hunting for him. This was reported by our correspondents Qobi Mandel and Bo'az Orgad.

Seven-Man Islamic Jihad Squad Uncovered in North

TA2003154991 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1430 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The Shin Bet, in conjunction with the Valleys Subdistrict police, has uncovered a squad, made up of seven youths from the village of Sandala, who are suspected of belonging to the Islamic Jihad and carrying out a series of nationalistically inspired activities.

Menahem Horowitz, our correspondent in the north, reports that they are suspected of painting slogans, flying PLO flags, and of setting fire to fields in Jewish settlements. They also attempted to receive arms from uprising activists in the territories.

Radio Reports U.S. Senate Aid Cancellation

NC2003220691 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The U.S. Senate tonight adopted a resolution to cancel U.S. aid to Jordan for the current fiscal year amounting to $57 million. The resolution was passed with a majority of 57 votes against 43, despite the opposition of the U.S. Government. It is worth mentioning that the U.S. Government had decided to reconsider its aid to Jordan but had not taken any measure in this respect.

In its resolution, the U.S. Senate said that President Bush can restore $35 million in economic aid to Jordan if he can prove to Congress that Jordan, according to the U.S. Senate, plays a useful role in the search for peace in the Middle East. Jordan, however, cannot without frank approval from Congress. [sentence as heard]

Senator Robert Dole, Republican minority leader in Congress, said that President Bush opposed the text of the resolution because it limits maneuverability in the peace process.

Al-Masri Discusses U.S. Efforts for Solution

JN2103081091 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 21-22 Mar 91 pp 1, 5

["Special" to JORDAN TIMES by Salamah Ni'mat]

[Text] Amman—Jordan warned Wednesday against American attempts to ignore the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict through seeking a normalisation of Israeli Arab relations instead of dealing with the Palestinian problem.

In a joint interview with the Jordan Times and the London-based al-Hayah newspaper, Mr. al-Masri said the Kingdom "will not accept a normalisation of relations with Israel before solving the Palestinian problem." He explained that Arab states had "no deep and serious conflict with Israel except that which is related to Palestinian problem."

Commenting on the U.S.-Israeli pronounced goals of "confidence building" leading to normalisation of Arab-Israeli relations, Mr. al-Masri said: "We do not think that this is the right beginning, and we do not think that Israeli talks with the Palestinians without Arab umbrella and international auspices can achieve the rights of the Palestinian people.

Renewing the Jordanian call for convening an international Middle East peace conference, "an important tool for the implementation of international resolutions on the Palestine problem," he said the United States will achieve nothing from its current efforts.

Mr. al-Masri pointed out that Arab response, particularly that of Syria, was "very important in terms of discouraging the American approach supported by Israel." He expressed confidence that Syria "will not accept the dilution of the Palestiian problem."

The foreign minister, who left Wednesday on a tour of Arab states, said that Jordan would continue contacts towards enhancing inter-Arab cooperation. He stressed the importance of "rejecting the division of the Arab World into two camps and working towards reviving joint Arab action, at least vis-a-vis the Palestinian problem."

He said the Arab World was now divided into two camps with the Gulf Cooperation Council, Syria and Egypt on one side and the remaining Arab states on the other.

Mr. al-Masri said he expected continued support for the group of eight, "which would deepen the state of polarisation and feed insecurity in the region."

The foreign minister, who is also a member of the Lower House of Parliament, said Jordan, which received an invitation to attend the regular meeting of the Arab League scheduled to be held in Cairo on March 30, "will attend the talks with the hope of achieving a minimum level of Arab solidarity." Mr. al-Masri expected all Arab countries to attent the league meeting except Iraq.

He expressed fear that the united States and some European states may attend to pressure the group of eight through the Gulf war alliance towards concessions on the Palestinian question after isolating it from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

U.S. and Israeli officials have recently stepped up their calls for reconciliation between Arab states and Israel, hinting that the Palestinian problem would have to be resolved by the Israelis and Palestinians themselves.

Commenting on the situation in Iraq, Mr. al-Masri said the wide-spread disturbances in northern and southern Iraq represented "a very dangerous situation that stands in contradiction of the concept of regional security prompted by the U.S.-led Gulf war coalition."

He expressed Jordan's "concern for the continuation of disturbances in Iraq and the resulting threats to the unity and sovereignty of Iraq and the stability and security of the entire region."

On the situation in Kuwait, Mr. al-Masri said that developments in the emirate remained "unclear due to the effects of the war." He expressed deep concern for Kuwaiti mistreatement of Jordanians and Palestinians living there. He said Jordan was "doing everything it can to stop such attacks in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international organisations." He added that the United States was also exerting efforts to help stabilise the situation in Kuwait and to stop the harassment of Jordanians and Palestinians there.

Leaves for Arab Maghreb Tour

NC2003134791 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri left Amman for Tripoli today on a working visit to the Libyan Jamahiriyah. The visit is part of a tour of the Arab Maghreb Union member countries with the aim of exchanging views with the officials in these countries on the current Arab situation and ways to bolster Arab solidarity and coordinate the march of collective Arab action prior to the convening of the Arab League Council's 95th regular session in Cairo late this month.

An official Foreign Ministry source said that the foreign minister's talks with his Arab Maghreb counterparts will focus on ways of giving a strong impetus to collective Arab action in order to surmount the previous unsatisfactory situation. The JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY has learned that the foreign minister will visit Yemen, Sudan, and Syria for the same purpose after his Arab Maghreb tour.

Iranian Embassy Formally Reopened in Amman

JN2103111191 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 21-22 Mar 91 p 3

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—The Iranian flag was hoisted at the Iranian Embassy here Wednesday, marking the formal opening of the embassy and putting into force an agreement reached by Amman and Tehran last January to restore full diplomatic relations at ambassadorial level.

Iranian Charge d'Affaires Hussein Nari Ghian [name as published], who raised the flag at a ceremony attended by Jordanian officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Parliament members, predicted that the coming phase will witness intensified efforts to expand bilateral ties in political, economic and social fields.

Mr. Ghian expressed pride at raising the Iranian flag over Jordanian territory which, he said, was sacred with the remains of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. He said he was honoured to be in a country which has played host to the largest number of Palestinians given refuge after being evicted from their Palestinian homeland and holy places.

Agreement on resuming diplomatic relations came on Jan. 14 following a visit to Tehran by Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri and several Parliament members and a visit to Amman by an Iranian parliamentary team to discuss bilateral cooperation in various domains.

Mr. Ghian paid tribute to the leadership of the two countries who, he said, were instrumental in paving the way for the restoration of ties, severed for the past 10 years.

"Normalising relations between Amman and Tehran is considered as a very significant step towards achieving solidarity among Islamic nations confronted with conspiracies concocted by the enemies of Islam," Mr. Ghian said in his address at the opening ceremony.

The embassy is temporarily located off Wadi Saqrah street, in the vicinity of the Chinese Embassy, pending refurbishing of the old Iranian-owned building in Jabal 'Amman. The hoisting of the flag on the embassy was due to have taken place last Saturday, but due to technical reasons the official ceremony was postponed, according to Iranian Embassy officials.

Dr. Khalid 'Ubaydat, director of the Foreign Ministry's Political Bureau, told the inaugural ceremony that the formal opening of the embassy marked the first step towards bolstering bilateral relations based on common interests and mutual benefits.

Mr. Ghian told reporters that contacts were under way between Amman and Tehran to pave the ground for a visit here by Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

He said that an official Iranian delegation would come to Amman in the coming two weeks for talks with Jordanian officials in preparation for Mr. Velayati's visit to Jordan.

Jordan and Iran have not yet named their respective ambassadors, but a Jordanian charge d'affairs is now in Tehran to pave the way for the reopening of the Jordanian embassy there.

Following the resumption of relations, the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company concluded a deal to export $66 million worth of phosphate to Iran in 1991, and a Jordanian trade delegation is expected in Tehran soon for talks with Iranian public and private sectors on trade.

Economic Delegation Returns From Libya, Comments

NC2003125691 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 20 Mar 91 p 3

[Text] Amman—The Jordanian economic delegation led by Dr. Ibrahim Badran, secretary general of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, has returned to Amman following a visit to Libya. The purpose of the visit was to become familiar with the possibilities of cooperation between the two fraternal countries, especially in the field of trade that has witnessed noticeable development recently. An economic and technical cooperation agreement between the two countries was signed in 1978.

Delegation head Dr. Ibrahim Badran said that during the four-day visit, the delegation held several meetings with Libyan officials in the Economy and Trade Ministry, the Industry Ministry, export organs, and others. The delegation visited a number of production facilities, and was briefed on the progress made in the field of economic development.

The delegation also visited Tripoli international fair, which this year was dedicated to Libyan products, with

only a limited number of wings for Arab countries, which included Jordan. Dr. Badran added that these meetings resulted in the signing of a work program to activate Libyan-Jordanian economic relations. This includes holding a session of the Libyan-Jordanian joint committee in the coming weeks in Amman. An agreement has also been reached to establish trade centers in each country, a Jordanian trade center in Libya, and a Libyan one in Jordan in addition to holding exhibitions of the two countries' products in the other country's capital. These exhibitions aim at familiarizing people with each country's national products.

An agreement was also reached on exchanging visits between Jordanian and Libyan businessmen. These visits aim at giving businessmen the opportunity to become familiar with the available opportunities in the other country.

Another agreement was reached to establish joint Libyan-Jordanian chambers of trade and industry that will help in entrenching trade and economic ties between the two countries.

Dr. Badran noted that through these visits it has become clear that Jordanian products are well accepted and enjoy a good reputation in the Libyan market. He also noted that a number of Jordanian products are in great demand in the Libyan market. This gives the Jordanian producer the opportunity to deal with this market where product quality must be excellent. He noted that the importance of a number of Libyan products on the Jordanian market.

Government Cancels Fuel-Saving Regulations

NC1703150291 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Mar 91 pp 1, 5

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—The government has scrapped a law introduced on Feb. 5 allowing private cars to run only on alternate days and said that all cars regardless of the numbers on their licence plates can run as of Sunday March 17.

The statement said that on the occasion of the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan, and depending on the Jordanian citizen's awareness of the need to reduce fuel consumption the government decided to cancel its regulations introduced last month. It said that it is hoped that the motorists will adopt measures of their own to reduce fuel consumption as much as possible and to use their cars only when it is necessary.

The statement was issued at the end of a cabinet session chaired by Prime Minister Mudar Badran, who two weeks ago issued the order, which, however, allowed all cars to run on Fridays.

The measure was originally introducted in the wake of damages to Iraqi facilities by allied bombing and attacks on oil tanker trucks bringing in crude oil from Iraq to Jordan and to cut down on fuel spending.

The government last Wednesday scrapped regulations introduced last October requiring stores, restaurants and other public and commercial places to close at fixed hours in the evening.

Street lighting was also cut in half and central heating in government offices reduced by 25 per cent in a bid to save fuel.

The government late last month took delivery of an oil tanker with about more than 100,000 tonnes of crude oil from Yemen and announced that Syria started supplying the country with gasoline and other products under an agreement reached between Damascus and Amman last month.

Paper Urges Strikes at 'Anyone, Anything American'

NC2103123591 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 21 Mar 91 p 18

["I Say a Word" column by 'Abd-al-Rahim 'Umar: "Humiliation to all Arabs"]

[Text] The U.S. forces and their allies downed an Iraqi Sukhoi aircraft in southwestern Iraq yesterday for disobeying the U.S. President's orders. The aircraft was not flying over occupied Palestine, for example, or any other part of U.S. territory, but in Iraqi airspace. The U.S. President commented on the incident by saying with clenched teeth that the U.S. forces in southwestern Iraq will not allow Iraqi aircraft to fly in Iraqi skies and any other Iraqi aircraft that violates this rule will suffer the same fate.

In the name of the United Nations and international legitimacy, the U.S. cowboy thus gives himself the right to deny Iraq sovereignty over its land, continues to instigate his agents from Iraq, Turkey, and other areas bordering Iraq to foment disturbances in various areas of Iraq, and announces that he will not leave Iraq until stability prevails.

The news media have circulated reports about the harsh conditions the U.S. cowboy and his longtime colonialist partner, the UK prime minister, have agreed to impose on Iraq. These conditions show how far people are willing to go to satisfy their thirst for revenge after a war. At the time when the Americans are pouring vast amounts of weapons and money into Israel, they are insisting that Iraq destroy its weapons. In this way, Israel would remain the only strong country in the region and would be able to expand as it wishes with nothing to deter it.

When the Arab citizen considers how he should respond to this situation, he will discover that this is a humiliation for every genuine Arab. He will also discover that he is confronting a power which no country, not even Iraq, can confont alone, a power that violates all legal standards. Nevertheless, this power must be confronted in such a way so that a similiar humiliation is inflicted on the other side. Frankly, neither the Iraqi Government

nor any other Arab government is capable of doing so. Only the Arab masses are capable of defending their dignity. It is time for the Arab masses to take immediate action and for Arab organizations, wherever they may be, to strike at anyone and anything American until they stop their aggression against us in Iraq, Palestine, and elsewhere.

Editorial: War Not End of U.S. 'Vietnam Complex'

NC2003122491 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 19 Mar 91 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "President Bush's Illusions"]

[Text] Premeditated murder cannot achieve victory, and no killer can escape his involvement. President Bush, who came to our homeland with his military arsenal, and who set a trap for Iraq's women, children, and elderly, does not stop claiming that he came to to protect the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from the "Iraqi ambitions!" He then threw aside that claim to make another one, which was that he had come to lead a war for the liberation of Kuwait. So, he began his savage war against the Iraqis with a grudge that is unprecedented in history, together with Mogul racism, whose brutality exceeds even that of Hulegu. Now, while occupying part of Iraq, starving the Iraqi people, and continuing his detestable action he comes out with one more aim of that premeditated brutal aggression—the aim of rescuing the American people from the Vietnam complex. Claims of protecting Saudi Arabia and liberating Kuwait from the Iraqis have fallen, and the only claim being stressed now is rescuing the Americans from that complex. Has President Bush succeeded in convincing people that he has achieved what he wanted?

As we have said, the killer cannot escape his involvement by killing more people, and what the United States has done to Iraq and its Arab and Islamic nations is part of a series of racist crimes that began before 2 August 1990 and are still continuing. That American aggression has persuaded the Americans that they can kill, destroy, and starve other nations whenever they wish. By this, Bush has created a serious psychological disease for his country and people instead of saving them from the psychological effects of the victory of the Vietnamese people and the defeat of the United States in a war in which faith and courage confronted grudge, the latest achievements of military progress, and the strong desire to slay others.

The roar of guns has stopped on the Gulf front, but a real war has begun. The Arabs have now realized that the West is dealing with them with scorn and that Islam and the Muslims have suffered much from the West's insults. All this convinces us, Arabs and Muslims, that a long holy war is awaiting us. Anger in the hearts of our children; Western hatred to their aspirations, dreams, and right to life; and the growing grudge in their hearts are signs that war has not ended but is coming. Even if we assume, for the sake of argument, that the American aggression has ended the American people's Vietnam complex, this brutal war being waged against us has created a feeling inside us that our confrontation with our enemies, including the United States, Britain, the Zionist enemy, and the others on the list, will take place in the future, and perhaps stones, knives, and even nails will be a decisive factor, although these enemies have a sophisticated war machine and are now sitting quietly, enjoying what their racism and grudge have achieved for them.

Vietnam, which was once merely a geographical area, is now becoming a historic confrontation, which will not end in accordance with the enemies' plans and which will not allow the Americans to live long with President Bush's illusion about the alleged salvation from the Vietnam complex.

Editorial Comments on Arab League Cairo Session

NC2003141691 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 20 Mar 91 p 4

[Editorial: "Slide Must Stop"]

[Text] Jordan's decision in principle to attend the 95th session of the Arab League Council offers a window of opportunity to begin the process of healing Arab wounds in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis. All indications point to Amman's acceptance of the invitation to go to Cairo for the Arab meeting at the foreign ministers' level.

True, Jordan has ample reservations about the speed and arbitrary way the Arab League's headquarters was transferred from Tunis to Cairo a few months ago. Six other Arab states also voiced concern about the manner of transferring the Arab organisation to Cairo and therefore boycotted the league's meeting in Cairo last September for that reason. Yet the fact remains that a resolution in principle was adopted in March of 1990 to transfer the Arab League to Cairo after the end of the suspension of Egypt as a league member. This is no time to haggle about form and procedural issues since the Arab World is beleaguered by a host of greater and potentially more dangerous conflicts and issues. Once the foreign ministers of the feuding Arab states get together and start talking to one another there will be endless opportunities to put the Arab World on the right track once again. Such an opportunity must not be missed. In the same vein, sincere efforts must be exerted to have Baghdad represented in such an Arab forum especially because it would be the first of its kind occurring in the wake of the Gulf war. Iraq was and still is an important part of the Arab Order and a founding member of the Arab League. No doubt, the Arab meeting's agenda is uppermost on the minds of the Arab countries participating in the Cairo session. Presumably the issues associated with the Palestinian case and the aftermath of the Gulf war would be accorded the highest priority. In this context, the Arab governments are invited to pay closer attention to the alarming situation inside Kuwait where persistent and confirmed reports speak of acts of torture, arbitrary

arrests and murder being committed against non-Kuwaiti nationals, especially Jordanian and Palestinian residents of that country.

The London-based human rights organisation, Amnesty International, has called for an investigation of the reports of gross and systematic human rights violations in Kuwait and a communique issued by it maintains that "the growing number of reports point to a pattern of abuses that must be open to urgent and independent investigation." The Arab League should be at the forefront of such an investigation and the Cairo Arab meeting on March 30 provides the kind of opportunity to begin or follow up on just that. It would be utterly irresponsible of the Arab countries to have international organisations whether non-governmental or governmental to conduct such an investigation while they sit idly by. Human rights violations in any part of the Arab World is a stigma and a travesty that would afflict all the Arab peoples wherever they are. Liberated Kuwait is naturally under the limelight of international and regional scrutiny and it behooves the government there to facilitate an Arab probe into its human rights record before it becomes the subject of international fora's microscopic investigations for years to come. The list of Arab countries under United Nations investigations for allegedly perpetrating gross and systematic human rights violations is already long and it would be a sad moment if one more Arab state is added to the dishonourable list.

Editorial Condemns Kuwaiti 'Oppression' Policy

NC2003162391 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
20 Mar 91 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Let the Crimes Against Our Nationals in Kuwait Stop"]

[Text] The government did well when yesterday it raised the ordeal our nationals are facing in Kuwait with the Kuwaiti ambassador and the concerned humane organizations following continuous news reports and an overflow of press reports on a series of crimes committed by the Kuwaiti authorities against Jordanians, Palestinians, and other Arabs residing in Kuwait.

It seems that torture, oppression, and even murder based on one's identity have become the policy of the Kuwaiti authorities. These authorities continue to commit such alarming violations and crimes within sight and hearing of human rights protectors, who are also the protectors of Kuwait and its non-democratic suppressive system.

Although reports on torture, oppression, and killing have been received since the Kuwaiti Government returned to power, we continued to disbelieve them, because we believe that Arab nobility and morals do not allow a Kuwaiti, no matter how enraged or misled, to commit such crimes forbidden by morals, honor, and conscience.

Now that everyone is convinced that the official Kuwaiti authorities expose the Arabs there, especially Jordanians and Palestinians, to all kinds of torture and oppression, we—all Arabs—must raise our voices in condemnation and denunciation of such practices that even the Israeli occupation authorities would be ashamed to commit.

The issue might require contacting the United Nations and the countries that have the final word over Kuwait in order to present the case to them. They could also demand that Jordanians and Palestinians in Kuwait be protected from the ruthlessness of an authority that considers itself removed from blame and interrogation as long as it is under the flag of the Atlantic alliance and seeks the protection of the allied forces.

Under any conditions, the disgraceful practices against humanity, not to say Arabism and Arab fraternity, in Kuwait is an eternal shame to its perpetrators who disregarded all values, principles, and considerations. They were driven by blind revenge, committing disgraceful and pathetic crimes that bring forth anger and disgust.

Hence, we call on the Kuwaiti authorities, intoxicated with the U.S. power, to reconsider and rectify such misled polices. Such polices, in the end, only bear more bitter fruit that bring to it owners the Arab peoples' disgust and hatred, and might lead to unimaginable reactions that can certainly be expected.

Islamic Jihad: Hostage Release Depends on Israel

NC2103114291 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 20 Mar 91 pp 1,8

[Text] AL-NAHAR received a statement from the Organization of the Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine at 2115 yesterday. The statement was accompanied by a polaroid photograph of American hostage Jesse Turner, who was kidnapped from the Beirut University College on 24 January 1987.

After warning the United States against attempting to "remain in or dominate" the region, the statement said that the release of the Western hostages in Lebanon is contingent on the release of "the mujahidin in the Zionist prisons." It added that it would welcome the release of 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd, who was kidnapped from his village Jibshit, in southern Lebanon, by the Israelis last year as a "prelude to the solution." The text of the statement follows:

"Following the recent developments in the region, the American invasion of the sacred lands, the talk about a security system in the region, and the American effort to solve the hostages issue, the Organization of the Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine announces the following:

First: The region will not become stable under the control of the infidel invaders. We will not allow America to do what it wants in the area nor will we allow its plans to be implemented. What they plan is one thing, and what will happen will be something else if they attempt to remain or dominate the region. The security system is designed to consolidate the American presence, give this presence the necessary cover by the states in the region, ensure the maintenance of the security of American interests, and keep these states in the orbit of American policy. It is not designed, as some have imagined, to find final, just solutions. Final, just solutions, as far as America is concerned, lie in the collapse of the region militarily, politically, and economically. This is what they think will happen. The future will be full of crises, tension, and instability, and will involve the expulsion of the invaders and ending the State of Israel.

Second: Our people inside [the occupied territories] are not alone. They are passing through a necessary militant stage in which they are paying with their blood. The Zionists are using all the savage means to suppress and kill our people within the hearing and sight of the world, but no one is doing anything about it. There are, however, some who are waiting to do something at the appropriate time to deter the Zionist criminals. We believe that Israel is on its way to extinction. This is its inevitable end, and it will happen.

Third: Regarding the hostages issue, the solution of this issue is contingent on the release of the detainees in the Zionist prisons. This is the final framework for the solution. Any other action will be invalid. It has been proven that pressures and mediations, with all due respect to the mediators, are useless. How many times did America threaten to use force, but remained helpless, with its nose remaining dirtied in the soil and its threats empty... [ellipses as published] As for the diplomatic efforts, we welcome the mediators in these efforts, but on the basis of the release of the detainees. It would have been better for America to submit from the start and not to be arrogant and waste time.

Finally, we would welcome the release of Shaykh 'Ubayd as a prelude to the solution. We encourage efforts to free the mujahidin in the Zionist prisons.

Peace be upon those who serve what is right for its sake.

[Signed] The Organization of the Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine.

Foreign Hostages Reportedly To Be Freed Soon

RFL Reports 'Friday' Release

NC2003200891 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1945 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] According to initial information made available to Radio Free Lebanon, foreign hostages are to be released over the weekend following intensive contacts involving Washington, Damascus, and Tehran. The U.S. hostages, official sources say, will be freed Friday and the rest on Saturday in the presence of a number of ambassadors of the countries concerned. Interior Minister Sami al-Khatib, and Syrian Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an. The hostages are to be handed over at either the Summerland Hotel, the Beau Rivage Hotel, the Biqa's Shtawrah Park Hotel, or the Ba'albak Palmyra.

AL-DIYAR: Release 'This Week'

NC2003130891 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The Lebanese newspaper AL-DIYAR says that the Western hostages in Lebanon will be released soon, despite the kidnappers' demand that Israel should first release some Arab prisoners. In today's issue the newspaper cites some of the organizations holding hostages as saying that the hostages may be released this week. The six American hostages will be released in a Beirut hotel and then taken to Damascus, where Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' will hand them over to the U.S. ambassador to Damascus.

The rest of the hostages—three Britons, two Germans, and one Italian—will be handed over directly to their respective ambassadors in Beirut.

Syria, Iran Reach 'Understanding' on Hostages

NC2103104291 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 18 Mar 91 p 8

[Text] A ranking Syrian source has affirmed to Lebanese leaders that Damascus reached an understanding with Iran during the visit of Vice President Hasan Habibi on

the need to release the foreign hostages in Lebanon, some of whom have been held for more than six years.

A ranking ministerial figure has advised the Iraqi opposition to work with Iran for the hostages' release in order to arrange its state of affairs with Washington amid the earnest work to find an alternative to the present regime in Iraq.

Fadlallah Says Saddam 'Detained' Shiite Leader

NC2103071991 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has issued a statement which says: News agencies have reported from Baghdad that Iraqi ruler Saddam Husayn received Ayatollah Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i. The reports add that Iraqi television carried footage of this meeting.

His eminence added: We assure you that the real issue is one of the detention rather than the reception of Imam al-Khu'i, who represents the highest religious authority for Muslim Shiites all over the world. We have received reliable information that Imam al-Khu'i and a number of other al-Najaf ulema were detained and taken from the sacred city of al-Najaf to Baghdad. This brutal and arbitrary measure is part of an attempt to portray this leading member of the Shiite ulema as supporting the tyrannical regime by forcing him to make such public appearances against his will.

His eminence added: We denounce this unprecedented criminal act. We call on the Muslims, the oppressed, the free men of the world in general, and Lebanon in particular, to express their utmost denunciation of this act by all peaceful means so that the life of this Islamic 'allamah may be spared. We fear he is in danger of meeting the same fate as martyr Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadir, who was coldbloodedly killed by Saddam.

Ja'ja' Condemns Government Repression

NC2003183091 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1440 GMT 20 Mar 91

["News conference" by Lebanese Forces Commander Samir Ja'ja' in Ghidras—live]

[Excerpts] To open this gathering, I want to denounce the act perpetrated against His Excellency [Defense] Minister Michel al-Murr. I hope that this will be the last time we see something like this happening in Lebanon. I hope that all parties, regardless of their political inclination, will resort to political and democratic ways. In the final reckoning no method can lead to the desired results except these. The 15-year experience was the best proof. [passage omitted]

Our support for the process of national reconciliation was intended to serve five main objectives, among others. We wanted to stop a war that produced only ruin, devastation, killing, and displacement. Ending the war does not merely mean that guns and bullets fall silent. Ending the war also signifies putting an end to an atmosphere of menace that, like the sword of Democles, hangs over heads all the time. By the process of national accord we wanted to restore a sovereignty that was violated with the utmost sadism by foreigners who wrought havoc in Lebanon and appointed themselves guardians and rulers, and which the rulers of this homeland did not know how to defend and retrieve. [passage omitted]

By the process of national accord, we wanted to embark on building a state with enthusiasm and hope—the state of the year 2000 instead of the state of 1943, that rickety boat that capsized with its owners in 1975. [passage omitted]

It pleased us that the national accord process was entrusted to Arab and foreign friends of Lebanon who would foster it and hold its hand, particularly when it took its first steps, and provide it with the assistance it needed to hasten its progress and reach its objectives in the shortest time.

We heard many promises of assistance from the Arab tripartite committee, the United States, France, the Vatican, and other countries. Based on the guarantees they assured us, we believed that the end of our sorrows was near. We spared no effort or sacrifice and provided every possible facility to create the necessary atmosphere to ensure the success of the national accord process. Some of these promises, however, sank in the quicksands of the Gulf events. Some promises lost their glimmer and the remainder their fervor.

There were those who were lying in wait for Lebanon and seized the opportunity. Abruptly, when no one was looking, the accord process began to deviate from its course with the formation of the 30-member government. This followed many acts that were carried out in various places and which did not bode well. The current government is a total contradiction of the national accord in its makeup, the way it came into existence, and in its actions. It does not bring together those who are supposed to be able to achieve national accord. Those able to achieve national accord remained outside the government. Even if the government admitted some of them into its makeup, it did this in such a way that it did not give them a position commensurate with their effectiveness and positiveness. This government includes some people who we appreciate and respect but also some people who are not effective at all, some who have no shape except that of the vessel in which they are put, and some who have corrupted, damaged, and destroyed the homeland and society to serve non-Lebanese interests.

This government forged its identity—its identity as a government and its national identity. It claims that it is a national accord government but actually does not enjoy a mimimum of national balance. Can there be accord where is no balance? Can there be accord where there is no ability at all to accomplish it? It claims that it is a Lebanese Government but actually has nothing of this description except the claim appearing in the decree

by which it was formed. If Lebanon's share of it had at least been equal to that of other parties, it would have been something. It lacks even the very hint of sovereignty.

You know, sometimes there is a very poor person who has nothing to give, but from whom the spirit of generosity radiates. Sometimes there is a very rich person who has no hint of generosity and a spirit of miserliness radiates from him. The government lacks even the hint of sovereignty. Of independence this government does not have one iota.

If this government maintains its current course, it will not dare restore sovereignty. It showed boldness only against the sons of the homeland as if they, and not the foreigners, had usurped sovereignty. We have never seen a government that is so linked to foreign parties as this one, not only in terms of politics, but also in the building of vital economic institutions. This government formed itself in such a way as to put it constantly at the mercy of foreign parties. Even the Lebanese contracting firms, which have proven their high technical skills and moral standards throughout the world, are no longer viewed by this government as capable of building our country on their own. This is happening at a time when Lebanese citizens are greatly suffering from a stifling economic crisis.

As for the sharing of freedom, the government is talking a great deal about it. May God help anyone who opposes this government. Since independence we have not seen a government that undertakes to quash freedoms as this government has done. Persisting in its disdain, exploitation, and contempt of all values, the government is doing this under resounding slogans. I wish the government would at least admit it and say that it was free to do what it wanted and would quash freedoms. Its resounding slogans, however, glorify and sing the praise of freedoms. Under the pretext of reassuring the citizens, of building up an atmosphere of peace, and of eliminating anything that might offend the people, the government created the slogan about consolidating greater Beirut and committed ugly acts of aggression against the people, violated the sanctities of their homes and terrorized their owners, and contemptuously dragged out some of them in blatant defiance of human rights.

Under the slogan of creating a free atmosphere, the government raided political centers of time-honored parties and forces having roots, history, presence, and good standing in our society, whether the government recognizes them or not. The Phalangist Party Central headquarters, the Lebanese Forces headquarters, the civil administration center in 'Alayh, and other party centers are symbols for large segments of the Lebanese people. There can be no justification for raiding the Phalangist Party headquarters. What after all could be inside? There can be no pretext for raiding the civil administrtion center in 'Alayh nor the Lebanese Forces headquarters. If the government does not trust these centers, I think there can be no hope for trust in anyone. The people have passed on these values to their sons so that they can take over looking after the homeland. Without these values this homeland would not exist, and such a government would not exist in its name or for its sake. Breaking into people's homes the way it was recently done, regardless of the pretexts for such behavior, and violating the dignity and privacy of these homes with such methods, means assassinating the simplest meaning of freedom. If searching for weapons is the excuse, then which of us does not know where these weapons are? What is meant here is heavy weaponry, and that is what they are after, in principle, with these break-ins.

As for personal weapons, they have always been and will continue to be the Lebanese individual's permanent friends throughout history. He will never give his weapon up under any circumstance. The government is engaging in a process of humiliation by entering the homes of some people by force, as though these homes were hideouts for tanks, armored vehicles, heavy artillery, and other such destructive weapons. Everyone is asking the government: Has it found the arms it alleged were hidden?

This government has broken into centers, headquarters, and private homes, acting on flimsy grounds. Either the information it has is wrong, which would be a problem, as no respectable government should act on the basis of unconfirmed information, especially when it concerns the freedom and dignity of the people; or the government has bad intentions, which is an even greater problem. What happens when these two problems are combined in this government?

Gentlemen, the biggest disappointment our people have experienced is that they do not see any of the characteristics of the new formula for the new Lebanon. The people hoped for a progressive, forward-looking formula that would not explode in our faces every now and then. Instead of applying the desired formula, and with a one-track Jacobinic view of the al-Ta'if accord, this government is working to achieve a national structure that makes the 1943 National Covenant look very good.

This government has not woken up to events or learned from them. It did not learn how to read the Lebanese geographic, historical, and political reality. United Lebanon is enriched by the pluralism of its sons' religious groups and their varied education. Even this aspect has been neglected by the government and not given any importance. In fact, the government smashed these facts against a wall, even with regard to the simplest details of normal life. The desire for Lebanon is suffering so much that it has acquired a fluid identity and lost its history. Its sons are less optimistic than before, even less so than in the days of the shelling we all experienced. The various groups of people are worried about their security and freedom, and even their education. This government is even more contrived and superficial than the government before it.

Would you tell me, gentlemen, what segment of the Lebanese population this government represents, what trend it speaks for, and on whose behalf it speaks? Our true national reconciliation process has not advanced a single inch. We have opposed this government and have been logical and realistic—or at least tried—in all that we have said about it. Yet, we have declared and reiterated that our opposition will stop short of rejecting any positive initiative that may salvage what may be salvaged. We have confidence in ourselves and in the future. We have enough courage to take the right stand at the right time in the interest of the homeland. This is the time to make yet another attempt to keep up with the national reconciliation march and to put the available means at its service in the hope that it will right itself and turn into true reconciliation.

Gentlemen: Following many promises and much talk about embracing reconciliation and harmony on crucial matters as advised by friendly countries sponsoring the national reconciliation and quite a few Lebanese officials, the Lebanese Forces leadership convened, and decided on the following after consultations with our allies, especially the Phalangist Party and other parties of long standing:

First, that the Lebanese Forces commander will resign from the government.

Second, that the Lebanese Forces will be represented by Roger Dib, member of the Lebanese Forces Command Council.

Third, the Lebanese Forces representative will complete, with friends, allies, and loyal and sincere people inside the government, what the Lebanese Forces have been doing from outside the government for the past three months in order to correct what can be corrected.

Gentlemen: Our attending the Cabinet sessions meant going the extra mile in an attempt to salvage whatever could be salvaged. This is not to say that it has become a truly national reconciliation government or a balanced government. There are many more parties that are still outside the government. We still hold the same opinion of the government so long as its present makeup and practices persist. For our part, we will continue to speak out as we should, and do what ought to be done. These are our most basic rights in a country where democracy is of long standing. We will keep up our struggle through all the democratic, political channels available to us in the interest of our aims and aspirations and the dreams of all Lebanese people.

On this occasion, I sincerely urge the president, the prime minister, and all the ministers that we build together the new Lebanon. The opportunity has not been lost. We still have all chances for success and for completing the march of detente until it reaches its happy ending. Let us try to compensate for the lack of balance in the structure of the government by improving the way it works and behaves. Let us to try to compensate for foreign intervention by adopting national decisions that are as clear as the sun and that are decisive for the homeland. Let us try to replace snobbery, conceit, and Jacobinism with a sincere spirit of cooperation. Let each side stop monopolizing the truth. Let us know that each of us possesses only a part of the truth. The whole truth only exists among all of us.

We have embarked on this step, aware of all its consequences on all levels. We have wanted to be positive until the end in return for possible positive attitudes in favor of the homeland and the citizens. We have embarked on this step to reactivate all democratic political forces and to put them practically and legally in the service of the aims we uphold and in which you believe.

On this occasion I assure the Lebanese people that Lebanon will survive, freedom will return, sovereignty will be restored, and independence will be achieved. We are an energetic people who will not be defeated by despotic foreign wills. We will carry on our struggle with all available democratic means. We will triumph, without a doubt. Long live Lebanon.

Iraqi Refugees Tell of Intensified Fighting

NC1903220991 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 2115 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Iraqi brothers arriving at the al-Hawl camp in al-Hasakah from Iraq tonight confirmed that the popular revolution against the Iraqi regime is spreading.

In statements distributed in a number of Iraqi cities, the opposition forces have declared their readiness to enter the capital, Baghdad, and liberate it from the regime. The refugees noted that the popular uprising is intensifying in various Iraqi regions and stressed that many of Iraq's major cities in the north and south are now under the opposition's control despite the Iraqi regime's futile attempts to retake some of them. They added that the popular opposition forces are firmly confronting the regime's attempts to retake the cities under their control. The pro-regime's forces suffered heavy losses when they attempted to enter Karkuk, al-Kut, and al-Nasiriyah where they used heavy artillery.

One refugee cited eyewitnesses arriving in Mosul from al-Sulayminiyah as saying that fierce battles are raging between the popular forces and the regime's forces in this governorate and that the latter have failed to retake al-Sulayminiyah.

The refugees stressed that the Iraqi people cannot tolerate any longer the sufferings and tragedies perpetrated by the Iraqi regime against the people. They added that the Iraqis look at the regime as hostile to the people and as plotting against Iraq and the Arab nation because it has caused losses and tragedy and placed itself above the people; because it considers its fate to be more important than the people's will; and because it acts at the expense of the blood of the innocent which is being shed everywhere in Iraq.

Press Views Iraqi Uprising, Israeli Intransigence

NC1903110591 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0545 GMT 19 Mar 91

[From the press review]

[Text] The newspaper AL-BA'TH says: No one, it seems, can stop the popular uprising in Iraq or stifle its flame before it achieves its goals and restores to the Iraqis their right to decide their own future and end the oppression and injustice Iraq endured during the long years of Saddam Husayn's rule.

AL-BA'TH adds: Those who listened to the speech that the Iraqi ruler made two days ago must have sensed how beleaguered that ruler is now that the revolt of the Iraqi people have turned, in a matter of weeks, into a tidal wave of protest in which every Iraqi is taking part.

AL-BA'TH says: It is odd that the Iraqi leader still hopes that a single soul in Iraq or the Arab World would listen to his lies after everything he has done to Iraq and the region the past 10 years. Saddam has led Iraq to the worst defeat in modern history.

AL-BA'TH concludes its editorial by saying: The threat to Iraq of partition or submission to foreign powers will become real only if Saddam holds on to power. This threat is not posed by the revolution of the Iraqi people or their fight for dignity and sovereignty. That threat will never be realized, because our proud people in Iraq have held up the torch of revolution and found the course that will bring them to safe shores and that will restore to Iraq its strength, pride, and role among the Arab and world nations.

Using the headline "Total Iraqi Uprising," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Reports about the Iraqi uprising in Arab and international media indicate that the uprising is steadily growing and gaining popular support. The uprising will continue to confront the regime and its backers until it puts an end to that regime and to its misguided policies and destructive ways. This will enable Iraq to begin once more rebuilding its future in a democratic manner that aims at achieving the goals of unity.

The newspaper TISHRIN addresses the Israeli position's hostility to peace. The paper says: For an entire week, the Israelis have made daily statements asserting their firm opposition to all the steps and efforts aiming at the establishment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East crisis. The Israelis also reiterated their aggressive and expansionist policies, their racists schemes, and their ambitions for controlling more Arab territories. The Israelis have shown little regard to the resolutions of the international legitimacy and the United Nations, particularly in what concerns the Arab-Israeli conflict, such as UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

TISHRIN adds: The enemy leaders, as they repeat their allegations and false claims and compete in spreading disinformation, are not just undermining the foundations of stability and peace in the region, but asserting their defiance of all international conventions and laws. It is to be recalled that the United States has asserted its commitment and eagerness to achieve peace in the region on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338. The Arabs are called upon, before anyone else, to confront the designs of the Zionist enemy. However, the international community, particularly the United States, should discharge its commitments and force Israel to abandon its positions of rejection and intransigence and to give up its expansionist plans, for this would serve the cause of peace and the interests of mankind.

Change Urged in Israel's 'Expansionist Mind-Set'

NC2003192091 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 15 Mar 91

[From the press review]

[Text] Under the headline "The Road to Peace," AL-THAWRAH writes: Equitable and durable peace in the Middle East is indispensable to stability and security in

this sensitive part of the world. In the quest for peace in the region, the Arabs have proved no less consistent than the international community. Throughout their dispute with Zionism, the Arabs have never spared themselves in the cause of peace. Israel, however, has remained the stumbling block to every international effort and initiative to find a fair solution to the dispute.

Noting the unusual swirl of diplomatic activity sweeping the region to promote solutions to its problems, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict, the paper says: The point must be made that whatever has stood in the way of peace in the region must be removed, with Israeli aggression being the most serious and most important factor. It is the backing this aggression has received that has kept it going. It also explains Israel's contempt for UN resolutions on the Palestinian issue—the heart of the conflict.

AL-THAWRAH says in conclusion: Hence, the inescapable conclusion that the road to a just, lasting, and firm peace must begin by forcing Israel into changing its aggressive, expansionist mind-set and putting an end to its aggression. If international legitimacy were to be applied in the Arab-Israeli dispute just as happened in the Gulf, peace would become a real possibility.

Commentary Stresses Need To Apply Single Standard

NC1403022491 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: World attention is now focused on the problems in our region, especially the Arab-Zionist conflict. Various circles are making efforts not to allow what appears to be an opportunity to put a definitive and fair end to an extremely serious conflict, which has cast a shadow over the peace and security of the region since the Zionist occupation of Palestine and the establishment of the Zionist entity 40 years ago, to be lost. Predicated on international legitimacy and UN resolutions as they are, it is only right these efforts be vigorously pursued. The Arabs have supported these UN resolutions all along and insisted that they be invoked in the settlement of international disputes, especially the Arab-Israeli dispute. Israel, in contrast, has consistenly and stubbornly spurned these resolutions, thus sparking many ruinous and devastating wars.

If international legitimacy and UN resolutions on regional problems are to be upheld, it is only logical and fair that a single standard be applied in approaching them. This applies as much to those resolutions that bear on our interests as other resolutions. This is consistent with our commitment to the principles of peace and justice and our deference to the will of the international community. World peace and security cannot be safeguarded unless one standard is applied to all world problems. Thus, in their dispute with Israel, the Arabs have been particularly pained to see how it has been allowed to get away with noncompliance with the UN resolutions that clearly condemn aggression and envisage a just and comprehensive peace obtainable only through an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab land and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

A review of the past reveals that whereas we have shown respect for international legitimacy and resolutions, Israel has defied these resolutions and pursued its aggressive and expansionist agenda at the expense of our territory and interests and the Arab nation's right to freedom and progress. Under such circumstances, we have had to make provisions for self-defense against the Zionist danger which never attempted to conceal its aims. Damascus would like to send this message to the world: We seek peace with justice, and, in the interest of world stability, we stress that a single standard must be used in addressing all problems of the region, thus enabling the entire region to embark on the road of construction and progress.

Afghanistan

Fierce Battles in Khowst; Government Fires Scuds

BK2103103691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1014 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Kabul, March 21 (AFP)—Afghan Government forces and mujahidin guerrillas pursued the battle Thursday for control of the eastern border city of Khowst, officials here said.

Substantive details such as casualties were unavailable on the fighting, which the Afghan Foreign Ministry described as fierce.

Transport aircraft made more than 50 trips from the capital Wednesday night, ferrying soldiers and military equipment to reinforce troops in the war zone who were trying to beat back the week-old mujahidin offensive, officials said.

Government forces fired Soviet-built SCUD missiles from Kabul, targetting mujahidin positions in and around Khowst, while troops on the battlefront were being backed by air bombardment of guerrilla strongholds, the officials said.

Kabul Radio broadcast a stream of messages of support for the Khowst army garrison and the city's residents. Officials denied mujahidin claims that the old airport of Khowst had fallen into guerrilla hands.

The government of President Najibullah has charged that the mujahidin offensive involving 3,000 rebels had the active support of Pakistan, the main backer of the resistance.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Humayun Mukammel alleged that Pakistan's regular troops and militiamen were participating in the fighting which began March 14 with rocket attacks on Khowst, some 30 kilometres (18 miles) from the Pakistani border.

He said Pakistan had also moved one armoured brigade, some artillery units and planes to the border.

Foreign Minister 'Abdul Wakil urged the United Nations in a message released here Wednesday to restrain Pakistan, which he said was violating the U.N. charter and international laws.

Simultaneously, President Najibullah urged Pakistan to "consider seriously taking steps to build a strong economic relationship between our two countries for the benefit of both."

"The situation in the region and the world as a whole has changed," Mr. Najibullah said in a statement. "It has become favourable to political solutions of all problems.

"In this situation, it would be a pity if chances of an Afghan solution are missed because of increased intervention and rivalry," he added.

The mujahidin, which has been fighting for 12 years to topple the Soviet-backed government and establish Islamic rule in Afghanistan, has rejected a ceasefire announced by Kabul for the moslem holy month of Ramadan.

Khowst has been the target of several unsuccessful rebel offensives since the Soviet Union withdrew its forces from Afghanistan two years ago.

Bangladesh

Cabinet Portfolios, Khaleda Policies Reported

BK2003160691 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The acting president has allocated the portfolios to the newly appointed prime minister, ministers, and the ministers of state.

The ministers with their portfolios are:
Begum Khaleda Zia—Establishment, Information, Energy and Mineral Resources
Mirza Gholam Hafiz—Law and Justice
Dr. Badruddoja Chowdhury—Education
Majedul Haq—Agriculture, Irrigation, Flood Control and Water Resources
A.S.M. Mustafizur Rahman—Foreign Affairs
Saifur Rahman—Finance and Planning
Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder—Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
Oli Ahmed—Communications, Railways, Roads and Highways
M. Keramat Ali—Commerce
M.K. Anwar—Shipping
Shamsul Islam Khan—Industry
Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf—Health and Family Planning

The state ministers with their portfoilios are:
Sheik Razzak Ali—Law and Justice
Tariqul Islam—Social Welfare and Women's Affairs
Dr. Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain—Energy and Mineral Resources
Barrister Rafiqul Islam—Labor and Manpower
Mohammad Shamsul Islam—Post and Telecommunications
Abdur Mannan Bhuiyan—Jute
Barrister Zamiruddin Sirkar—Land
Barrister Nazmul Huda—Food
Major, Retired, A. Mannan—Textile
Abdullah al-Noman—Environment and Forests; Fisheries and Livestock
Mirza Abbas—Youth and Sports
Abdul Mannan—Civil Aviation and Tourism
Kabir Hossain—Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives
Mujibur Rahman—Finance
Principal Yunus Khan—Education
Mohammad Nurul Huda—Information

Ansar Ali Siddiqui—Irrigation, Flood Control, and Water Resources
Osman Gani Khan—Establishment
Luftur Rahman—Relief
Professor Abdul Mannan—Religious Affairs

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia says the first and foremost task of her government will be to restore the economy and rebuild the financial and other institutions destroyed by nine years of autocratic regime. She was talking to newsmen at the Darbar Hall of Bangababan [President's House] after being sworn in. Begum Zia sought the cooperation of all political parties in establishing on a firm footing. It is not the responsibility of the party in power alone to strengthen democracy. The prime minister said her government will work for restoration of law and order and ensuring peace and discipline in all spheres of life.

Begum Zia said her government would fulfill all the pledges made to the people by her party. Begum Zia stressed the importance of consolidating the independence and sovereignty of the country. She paid tribute to the people for their heroic struggle against the autocratic regime. The prime minister expressed the hope that people from all walks of life would extend cooperation to her government to consolidate the victory which was achieved with the installation of a democratically-elected government.

The prime minister said her government would stand by the commitment for the speedy trial of Ershad and his cronies.

Press Urges New Leader To Fight Corruption

BK2103090591 Hong Kong AFP in English 0802 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Dhaka, March 21 (AFP)—The Bangladesh press Thursday wished Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia well in her new post while urging her to be tough in fighting corruption.

Newspaper editorials and commentaries said the country would fully support the new prime minister in any anti-corruption efforts.

Bangladeshis are "looking up to the new government to fulfill their expectations of establishing their fundamental rights, a corruption-free society and a true democracy," the mass-circulation daily ITTEFAQ said.

The pro-government BANGLADESH TIMES seemed to warn against too high expectations, saying "it would be a superhuman job to undo the wrongs of past regimes as well as initiate new methods of tackling the multiple problems" now facing Bangladesh.

But the MORNING SUN said that if Begum Zia and her Bangladesh Nationalist Party government failed to uphold the incorruptible image of her late husband, slain President Ziaur Rahman, they "will be washed away from public memory much sooner than expected."

The DAILY STAR wrote that the swearing-in Wednesday of the country's first woman prime minister was a "momentous occasion" in itself.

And despite Bangladesh's many serious problems, THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER expressed cautiously: "There is nothing to be despondent about (in) our future."

The newspaper complimented Begum Zia's tough campaign stands on a number of key issues.

"Now," the newspaper added, "it is time for her to show the same attitude in handling national problems both at home and at the international level."

Special Court Implicates Ershad in Corruption Case

Ershad Pleads Innocent

BK2003162491 Dhaka Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Deposed President was today charged with the second case of possessing about two crore taka and converting (?state) gifts for personal use instead of depositing them to the public treasury. Reading out the charges against the accused, the special tribunal judge said the money Ershad acquired is not consistent with his main source of income.

Ershad pleaded innocent.

The court will resume hearing of the case on the 21st of next month.

Court Orders Wife's Release

BK2003134091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1335 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Dhaka, March 20 (AFP)—A court here Wednesday ordered the release of the wife of ousted Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, court sources said. A high court bench comprising Justice Mohammad Abdul Jalil and justice Kazi Shafiuddin said Begum Raushan Ershad should be released "if she is not required in detention in any other case."

The judges said they found the order to detain the former first lady under the Special Powers Act of 1974 "illegal, malafide and without lawful authority" because the grounds cited by the government were "irrelevant." Raushan Ershad, detained along with Mr. Ershad, filed a writ against her detention in the court last month.

A commission headed by a Supreme Court judge has begun an inquiry into alleged abuses of power by Mrs. Ershad, who is charged with amassing property, gaining illegal bank loans and travelling abroad with a large entourage in violation of government rules. The commission, headed by Justice Ansaruddin Ahmed, is also investigating allegations of corruption and abuse of power by Mr. Ershad. [passage omitted]

Presidential Election Bid Planned

BK2103055891 Hong Kong AFP in English 0552 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Dhaka, March 21 (AFP)—Deposed Former President Hussain Mohammad Ershad said he would run in presidential elections expected in May, newspapers reported Thursday.

"Yes, I will contest... It is my fundamental right," Mr. Ershad was quoted as telling journalists covering his corruption trial on Wednesday.

Presidential elections would be held by May if the new government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia maintains the existing presidential system of government which the main opposition party would like to change to a parliamentary system.

Mr. Ershad, 61, contested last month's general elections and won all five seats in his home district of Rangpur.

He resigned as president in December during massive popular protest against his eight year old rule, and is now detained facing criminal charges.

India

Explosives Found, Five Militants Killed in Punjab

BK2103035491 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] In Punjab, a major tragedy was averted with the timely detection of about 20 kg of explosives in an abandoned truck near Shepur Chowk in Ludhiana yesterday. The state governor, General O.P. Malhotra, was to pass through that site for the inauguration of the rural sports meet.

Meanwhile, five militants and one police head constable were killed in separate incidents since last night. Two militants were killed in Amritsar and Bhatinda districts in encounters with police. One militant committed suicide and another was killed when some militants ambushed a police party escorting him in Amritsar District. Militants shot dead a police head constable in Joga town in Bhatinda District.

Gandhi Says Parties Undermined Economy, Society

BK2003061091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The Congress-I president, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, has alleged that the Janata Dal and Janata Dal-S and BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] have broken the country economically and socially for their own interest. Addressing a public meeting in Bikaner in Rajasthan yesterday, he said the non-Congress-I parties could not provide a stable, secular or clean government. Mr. Gandhi said non-Congress-I parties have weakened the society to such an extent that it would take take several years to make it normal again.

Janata Dal-S Stakes Claim as 'Real Janata Dal'

BK2003135091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The chief election commissioner, Mr. Seshan, has confirmed that the commission has received a communication from the Janata Dal-S claiming it to be the real Janata Dal. He said it is under consideration and a decision will be taken soon. In its communication, the Janata Dal-S has urged the commission to take an early decision on the dispute.

Tamil Nadu Assembly Polls To Be Held in Late May

BK2003140291 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu will be held along with the Lok Sabha polls in the second half of May. The Election Commission has accepted the recommendation made by the center to hold the assembly polls in the state. This was disclosed by the chief election commissioner, Mr. T.N. Seshan, at a press briefing in New Delhi today. President's rule in Tamil Nadu expires on the 29th of July this year. Mr. Seshan said so far no other state has made any request for the assembly poll.

Shekhar Sends Felicitation Message to Khaleda Zia

BK2003160391 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The prime minister, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, has felicitated Begum Khaleda Zia on her assumption of office as prime minister of Bangladesh. In a message, Mr. Chandra Shekhar said: With the reestablishment of democracy in Bangladesh, the time has come to work together to give a new impetus to Indo-Bangla relations.

Shekhar Accused of Appeasing Sharif on Kashmir

BK2003120591 Delhi PATRIOT in English 15 Mar 91 p 4

[Editorial: "Two Views on Valley"]

[Text] Jammu and Kashmir Government Girish Chandra Saxena's apprehension that, with the onset of summer, Pakistan may resume aiding subversives in the Kashmir Valley has once again exposed Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar's misplaced optimism regarding a change in Pakistan's attitude towards the Kashmir issue. Mr. Saxena's statements have revealed that contrary to the Prime Minister's belief, the lull in Pakistani encouragement to subversives earlier was provided solely by the inclement weather and inaccessibility of snow-covered mountain passes. In what seems highly intriguing, however, Mr. Chandra Shekhar, ever since his first parley with the Pakistani Prime Minister in Male, continues to remain convinced about Mr. Nawaz Sharif's good intentions on Kashmir. Facts, however, speak otherwise. Known to be more blatantly assertive of backing to Kashmiri secessionists even before he assumed office,

Mr. Sharif had made Kashmir his important issue for electioneering. Since then he has exploited every opportunity to step up supplies and training in guerilla warfare to Kashmiri secessionists and those Pakistanis who can be sent across the borders for action in Indian territory. This has proved a particularly useful strategem in his internal struggle. There is no reason to doubt that the Pakistani military intelligence apparatus supports his policy wholly towards Kashmir. He sponsored a nationwide ban in support of Kashmiri secessionists as a ploy to divert public attention from the army chief's criticism of his Persian Gulf policy in support of the U.S. military. Strangely enough, however, the Government of India chose to overlook what amounted to a blatant interference in India's internal affairs. Not even a routine protest was lodged with Islamabad over the incident. In fact, so convinced is the Prime Minister of the effectiveness of his personal rapport with his Pakistani counterpart that the latter's good offices were sought to secure the release of Ms. Nahida Imtiaz, daughter of National Conference MP [member of parliament], Prof. Saifuddin Soz, recently kidnapped and later freed by the JKSLF [Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front]. In doing so, however, Mr. Chandra Shekhar merely admitted the fact of Pakistan's involvement in such incidents. The logic behind the Indian Prime Minister's insistence on giving the Pakistani government the benefit of doubt is difficult to fathom. If it is directed towards lulling Indian public opinion into complacency, it only serves to send the wrong signals to both the secessionist outfits in the Kashmir Valley and their across-the-border patrons. It could well be that having misread the Indian Government's initiative of starting dialogue with militants as a sign of weakness, the JKSLF had indulged in the Pak-inspired mischief of kidnapping Ms. Nahida in an attempt to secure the release of their imprisoned comrades. Whether they succeeded in doing so still remains in doubt with conflicting claims being made by the State Government and the JKSLF. Mr. Girish Saxena has refuted the claims that appeared in a section of the press that the Government had released five hard-core militants and asserted that only one secessionist operative had been released. The mystery surrounding the deal worked out to secure Ms. Nahida Imtiaz's release as also the serious dichotomy of views expressed by the Prime Minister and the Governor on Pakistani support for militants in Kashmir are reflective of the lack of any coherent government policy on Kashmir. Such a confused estate of affairs can only indefinitely delay the return of peace to the Valley.

Pakistan's Kashmir Remarks Termed 'Unfortunate'

BK2003153391 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1430 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] India has described as unfortunate a statement by Pakistan Foreign Office on alleged violation of human rights in Kashmir. A spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said in New Delhi today that this statement is not based on facts but on distortions and misrepresentation. He said during the past several months, efforts were being made by both the governments to reduce tension and enhance mutual confidence. The statement made by the Pakistan Foreign Office is contrary to this trend.

The spokesman said allegations of atrocities by the security forces as mentioned several times before is part of a disinformation campaign being carried on by the terrorists and their patrons. He said New Delhi hopes that Islamabad will realize the necessity for building a cooperative and mutually-beneficial relationship between India and Pakistan in accordance with the Simla Agreement.

Imports Limited in Move To Save Foreign Exchange

BK2103092291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0755 GMT 21 Mar 91

[By Anil Penna]

[Text] New Delhi, March 21 (AFP)—India, its economy in a tailspin, has virtually frozen the import of all production inputs to hold on to precious foreign exchange in a move that stunned domestic industry.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) banned the free release of foreign exchange for the import of capital goods and slapped tough, new restrictions Wednesday on the import of industrial raw materials, components and consumer goods.

Banks were directed not to advance money to importers, including government-owned companies, against letters of credit. All applications for foreign exchange would have to traverse a maze of bureaucratic red tape for approval.

The RBI also steeply hiked the cash required to be deposited by importers—called margin money—to open a letter of credit for foreign exchange.

Importers would have to deposit for a period of three months 133 per cent of the sum they require. They only needed to produce 50 per cent margin money before the new regulations, which will be "strictly enforced until further notice."

Export-oriented units dependent on imports would have to deposit 50 per cent margin money, from which they had been totally exempted in the past.

Only imports of crude oil and lubricants, fertiliser, foodgrains, edible oil, newsprint and life-saving drugs were spared by the RBI, which justified the harsh curbs by citing an "extremely difficult foreign exchange position."

Analysts said the restrictions amounted to a virtual ban on the import of capital goods and raw materials required for India's import-intensive industry, and warned of a sharp slowdown in production and exports.

"It will have a very adverse effect," A.K. Vaish of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) said in an interview here. "Production schedules will go haywire and export deliveries will be affected."

"The production system may come to a standstill," he said. "The world will not wait for Indian exporters to deliver. They will look somewhere else for what they need."

The RBI directive came in the face of a balance of payments crunch, with India's foreign exchange holdings of 2.4 billion dollars barely enough to finance two months' imports.

Finance Ministry officials have been struggling to find ways of warding off a more serious liquidity crisis expected in June because of the anticipated delay in securing a two-billion-dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF is not expected to approve the request until after general elections in May bring in a new government to unveil a full-fledged federal budget, which is expected only in July.

Strict conditions such as subsidy cuts and the rupee's devaluation are expected to accompany the loan.

"The government had a choice between sustaining industrial growth or preserving foreign exchange," said D.H. Pai Panandikar, secretary-general of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. "It chose the second course."

"Frankly, it had no real option," he said. "With the state our economy is in, it is virtually impossible to secure commercial loans. We will have to wait for the IMF credit to salvage the economy."

Not all were so sympathetic.

"No doubt the country is facing a severe foreign exchange crunch. But this remedy is worse than the disease," a businessman told the INDIAN EXPRESS.

The growth rate of industrial production had been slipping steadily, from 13 percent to 11 percent to 3 percent in the past three quarters and would worsen over the next three months.

Import-intensive sectors such as petrochemicals, electronics and automobiles would be the worst hit by the new import curbs, Mr. Pai Panandikar said.

India has blamed the economic mess mainly on higher oil prices and falling remittances following the Gulf crisis. Oil imports in the year to March 31 are expected to cost about twice the three billion dollars it had budgeted.

Economic woes were worsened by domestic turmoil which hurt tourism, India's largest net foreign exchange earner.

The import curbs came as India sent an SOS to aid donors such as the United States and Japan for funds to bail it out until the IMF loan comes up, the TIMES OF INDIA said.

If the donors do not come to the rescue, India may be forced to default on loan repayments for the first time, lowering its already poor credit rating further in the international capital market, the times said.

Government Waives Recoveries From Gulf Returnees

BK2103051891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 21 91

[Text] Government has decided to waive all recoveries from the repatriates from Iraq and Kuwait. The spokesman of the external affairs ministry said in New Delhi yesterday that all passport officers in India have been authorized to extend normal passport facilities to such evacuees.

Iran

Iraqi Charge Summoned Over Ayatollah's Arrest

LD2103110791 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Mar 91

[Text] Following reports of insults to the grand ulema of Iraq, including news of his eminence, Grand Ayatollah Koh'i being put under pressure by the Government of Iraq, Mr. Sheykh-ol Eslam, deputy minister of foreign affairs in charge of Arab and African affairs, summoned the Iraqi charge d'affaires in Tehran. He advised the Iraqi charge d'affaires of the strong protest of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the desecration of the al-Najaf seminary, as well as the slaughter and insulting of the ulema of Islam, especially his eminence Grand Ayatollah Khu'i, who has been taken to Baghdad under duress and by force.

Our country's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs declared the grave concern of the Iranian nation and government for the health of Grand Ayatollah Khu'i, and demanded that every kind of pressure and restrictions against the Iraqi ulema, especially those against Grand Ayatollah Khu'i, be removed.

Iraqi 'Popular Forces' Take Over Highlands

LD2003160891 Tehran IRNA in English 1440 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Bakhtaran, Mar. 20, IRNA—A spokesman for the popular forces in Iraq said here Wednesday that today morning the highlands in Doumlan [place-name as received] between Karkuk and the Baroli military base in Northeastern Iraq were taken over by the people, effectively closing the Karkuk-Tikrit highway.

The popular forces are engaged in fighting the remnant of the pro-government forces in the area, he added.

In related news, the government's attempts to break popular resistance in the town of Tuz near Karkuk, by air raids and ground attacks have ended in failure.

Iraqi refugees arriving here last night said that pro-government forces suffered heavy casualties near Tuz, and 12 ranking officers were counted among the dead.

They also said that in the course of fighting by the uprising masses to take control of the city Karkuk some days ago many Army tanks were destroyed. The Army is now withdrawing to Tikrit after losing control of oil-rich Karkuk to popular forces, they added.

Reports from inside Iraq also speak that the Iraqi Government is slaughtering people in the holy city of Karbala'.

The pro-government forces' attack and desecration of shrines in the holy cities of al-Najaf and Karbala' has created a worldwide uproar. Last Monday was a public mourning day in Iran to commemorate the slaughter of civilians in the two holy cities.

Detente With Arabs, West, Hostage Release Seen

PM2003171791 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 17 Mar 91 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Delegation To Lebanon To Release Western Hostages"]

[Text] Tehran—SAWT AL-KUWAYT—Saudi-Iranian relations are expecting a "surprise" at more than one level in the next few days. This is what Iranian sources close to President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani have told SAWT AL-KUWAYT. They add that "the page of the past will be abandoned and a new page will be opened, to end all the outstanding problems between the two countries, including the Iranian pilgrims' participation in the next pilgrimage."

The sources believe that that approach falls within the framework of a policy of comprehensive opening up to the Arabs and the West which President Hashemi-Rafsanjani intends to pursue with a view to moving the train of government from the station of revolution to the station of statesmanship.

In that regard, the Iranian sources revealed that Hashemi-Rafsanjani has issued instructions to Iranian media services to suspend all media campaigns against the neighboring states, except Iraq. He urged them to keep away from "demagoguery and defamation" of the leaders of the Western states and some Arab officials. In a statement to SAWT AL-KUWAYT, a senior official Iranian source said that the recent improvement in Iranian-Egyptian relations is "the beginning of the end with regard to the phase of estrangement from our Arab brothers."

According to the Iranian source, Iranian Ambassador to Bahrain Javad Torkabadi (an expert in Gulf affairs) is entrusted by Hashemi-Rafsanjani with clearing the atmosphere between Tehran and Riyadh. And a high-level Iranian delegation is expected to visit Riyadh soon. The source hinted that Abadi made contacts through Bahrain and the Sultanate of Oman with official Saudi quarters which, in turn, welcomed the initiative and the establishment of strong relations with the Islamic republic.

Furthermore, a prominent Iranian journalist has revealed to SAWT AL-KUWAYT that chief editors of newspapers and magazines as well as radio and television officials received direct instructions a few days ago from the Islamic Guidance Ministry and the president's office regarding the need to stop attacking the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States, and Britain. The journalist (who asked to remain anonymous) said that Tehran will release British businessman Roger Cooper, who has been detained in Tehran for some years on espionage charges, as an expression of Tehran's satisfaction with London's decision to free the Iranian student Mehrdad Kowkabi whom the British authorities arrested over a year ago because of his involvement in placing explosives in a number of bookshops which displayed the Salman Rushdie book.

SAWT AL-KUWAYT has learned that, coinciding with the Iranian move toward the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whose results will emerge soon, Tehran informed the Canadian foreign minister when he visited a few days ago of its willingness to reexamine comprehensively the resumption of its relations with Washington. In that regard, a senior Iranian delegation headed by one of Rafsanjani's advisers will visit Beirut next week to discuss the question of the Western hostages in preparation for their release.

According to a senior Iranian personality, the guarantees that the Iranian leadership received from Syria regarding Hizballah's future and its role in political life in Lebanon are regarded by Tehran as sufficient to guarantee the hostages' release. The Iranian personality, who is on a visit to Britain at present, adds that international legitimacy and the new world order about which U.S. President George Bush is talking are still not understood by some people in Iran, like Fakhreddin Hejazi, "but matters are not in the hands of Hejazi, Mohtashemi, and the hardliners." The Iranian personality stressed that "those in power in Iran know well that the time has come to move the train from the station of revolution to the station of statesmanship."

Khamene'i Pardons Wartime Absentees, Deserters

LD2003113191 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] On the proposal of the Armed Forces General Command Headquarters and with the approval of His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution and the commander in chief, those who have been sentenced by military courts or commanders to extra military service in accordance with the penal act concerning wartime absentee conscripts and deserters

have been pardoned by him. As of 19 March all their extra military service, performed or not, will be set aside. The Armed Forces General Command Headquarters announced that the contents of the communique will be deemed mandatory guidance for all departments concerned and the judiciary organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran Armed Forces. It is imperative that they be implemented from the announced date.

Velayati Conveys Message to USSR's Bessmertnykh

LD2003152891 Tehran IRNA in English 1341 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow, March 20, IRNA—Iranian Ambassador to Moscow Nematollah Izadi hand-delivered to Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Belonogov a message by the Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali-Akbar Velayati to his Soviet counterpart Aleksandr Bessmertnykh here today.

In their meeting, the two officials also reviewed the latest developments on the international scene and the region as well as Iran-Soviet relations.

Pakistan

Legal Action Against Former Advisor Considered

BK2103005891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1756 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Islamabad, March 20 (AFP)—The Pakistani Government is considering taking criminal action against former defence advisor Syed Ijlal Haider Zaidi and seven other high ranking officials, informed sources said Wednesday.

All are allegedly involved in financial and other irregularities in the construction of a runway at Lahore Airport.

A three-member ministerial committee headed by Federal Minister for Production Islam Nabi proposed that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif recommend to President Ghulam Ishaq Khan that charges be filled in a special court against Mr. Zaidi, the sources said.

They said the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had been directed to initiate an investigation of Mr. Zaidi.

Also being investigated are two former directors of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), retired Air Vice Marshal Khurshid Anwar Mirza and retired Air Vice Marshal Akhter Mahmood as well as the Director General of the Airport Development Authority (ADA) Brigadier Ghulam Rasul, the Joint-secretary at the Ministry of Defence Chaudhry Abdul Rashid and two project directors.

The prime minister Tuesday accepted the resignation of Mr. Zaidi who is considered close to President Ishaq and was brought into the cabinet in November when the new government was formed.

A seasoned bureaucrat, Mr. Zaidi was retired as defence secretary soon after former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto took over in 1988.

As a defence secretary he was held responsible by the ministerial committee for the sub-standard construction of the Lahore Airport runway and other irregularities involving the project.

The committee also recommended to the prime minister that 60 million rupees (2.6 million U.S. dollars) should be recovered from Mr. Zaidi and the seven other officials involved in the case.

Mr. Zaidi appeared twice before the ministerial committee which also held him responsible for sub-standard work in the construction of a terminal at Jinnah and the apron at Karachi Airport.

He told the committee the decision to appoint U.S.-firm Bechtel as consultant in the project was made on the recommendation of late President Mohammad Ziaul Haq and former Finance Minister Mahbubul Haq.

He said the U.S. firm supervised the construction work at Lahore and was also appointed consultant for the projects at Jinnah and Karachi airports.

When the firm failed to live up to expectations it was replaced by French firm Sogea, he said.

The sources said the contracts were previously awarded to the government-owned ADA, but were withdrawn at the alleged intervention of Mr. Zaidi and awarded to CAA, which hired Bechtel.

Controversy arose in the issue following press reports that Mr. Zaidi submitted his resignation two weeks ago, reports which the president recently denied.

Some press reports also spoke of differences between the prime minister and president over the affair, but both have denied this.

MQM Demands Sindh Governor's Resignation

BK2003163291 Hong Kong AFP in English 1623 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Karachi, March 20 (AFP)—Altaf Hussain, leader of Pakistan's ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), has demanded the resignation of the governor of southern Sindh Province amid an ongoing boycott of newspapers published by the governor's family.

Accusing Governor Mahmood Haroon of becoming a spokesman for the fundamentalist Jamaat-E-Islami and former prime minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Mr. Hussain told a news conference here late Tuesday "we do not want a governor of the PPP."

Mr. Hussain's strong criticism of the governor came as the Herald Group of publications, owned by Mr. Haroon's family, published reports about division in the

MQM, the attack on a journalist and the seizure and burning of newspapers for the past three days allegedly by MQM activists.

The MQM claims to represent Urdu-speaking settlers who migrated from India after the 1947 division of the sub-continent.

The current situation arose when seven unidentified gunmen broke into the house of a local journalist, Zafar Abbas, here Sunday and injured him along with his younger brother for publishing and transmitting what was called a "biased and malicious report about MQM."

Mr. Abbas also works for the Urdu Service of the British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) and for the Dubai-based KHALEEJ TIMES.

Armed activists prevented distribution of the country's leading English daily, DAWN, for the third day running.

The STAR, an evening daily published by the Herald Group, said Wednesday that militants of MQM launched the third day of their attack against DAWN's distribution despite Mr. Hussain's announcement of a "voluntary boycott of all newspapers of DAWN Group."

The newspapers again said some elements of the police were involved in this "terror against the press," publishing stories critical of the ethnic organization.

Mr. Haroon, considered sympathetic to the MQM chief, was a frequent visitor to the movement's headquarters before taking office.

Many analysts say he was also instrumental in weaning the MQM away from the PPP in late 1989.

Many observers believe criticism of the governor may have arisen from his attempt to persuade the MQM chief to "keep his followers under control and not to indulge in acts of armed provocations against journalists and newspapers."

Yang Shangkun Meets Envoy; Lauds Relations

BK2103083891 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] The Chinese president, Mr. Yang Shangkun, has described the state of Sino-Pakistan relationship as excellent. He said the traditional friendship between the two countries had entered a new phase with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's recent visit to China. It will now grow further stronger and stronger. The Chinese president made these remarks during a farewell call by Pakistan Ambassador Mr. Akram Zaki in Beijing.

Sri Lanka

Amnesty Officials Visit 'First Time in 16 Years'

BK2103010891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1715 GMT 20 Mar 91

[Text] Colombo, March 20 (AFP)—The Sri Lankan Government said Wednesday it had allowed two officials of the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International (AI) to visit the island for the first time in 16 years.

Bradman Weerakoon, foreign affairs advisor to President Ranasinghe Premadasa, told reporters here that representatives of AI, earlier described by Colombo as a terrorist organisation, left Saturday after a week's stay.

In London an amnesty spokeswoman said the report, which had been received through the press, was "good news", but added that the organisation had not as yet received any official confirmation.

It would wait for confirmation before sending a team to the island, she said.

Mr. Weerakoon said AI's Head of Asia and the Far East Derek Evans and researcher Elizabeth Nissan were here for a trade union conference but they also had informal talks with rehabilitation and defence officials.

"The last time AI had a representative visiting Sri Lanka was in 1975. From about 1982, they have been having some problems with the government here and they were not allowed to come here," Mr. Weerakoon said.

Cabinet Spokesman and Industries Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe told reporters that an AI application to send a mission to Colombo was turned down in 1989 during the height of an anti-government uprising.

Mr. Wickremasinghe said Colombo did not want to allow AI at the time because Sinhalese extremists had links with the organisation and it also ignored the government's side of the story.

"After several discussions with them (AI) throughout last year and this year we believe we can (now) work together," Mr. Wickremasinghe said.

AI had been critical of the government's human rights record drawing severe attacks, particularly from the late State Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne, who dubbed AI as a terrorist organisation.

Operations Against LTTE 19-20 March

BK2103083091 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0700 GMT 21 Mar 91

["OANA/Pool" Item]

Colombo, Mar 21 (LANKAPUVATH)—LTTE [Liberations Tigers of Tamil Eelam] terrorists suffered heavy losses Wednesday [20 March] night when they resumed

their attacks on the security force camps in the north-western coastal towns of Silavatturai and Kokkuppadayan.

Official sources told LANKAPUVATH that the terrorists who had withdrawn in disarray early Wednesday morning after abortive attacks on the two camps in which they suffered heavy casualties, had regrouped and directed heavy fire at the Silavattura and Kokkupadayan camps under the cover of darkness in an attempt to avoid being spotted from the air. But, the security forces were ready for the terrorists and inflicted heavy casualties.

Official sources said government troops had launched a counter offensive and latest reports stated fighting was going on this morning.

The curfew in the district of Mannar and adjoining Aga's Divisions is continuing.

Earlier, in the first battle which lasted from 2100 hours local time Tuesday to 0300 hours local time Wednesday, 14 terrorists were reported as killed. They included women cadres. Five soldiers also died in the fighting.

Government troops inflicted heavy casualties on the LTTE in an area south of Mullaitivu and destroyed two hideouts and several terrorist bunkers Wednesday.

Final reports state number of terrorists killed at Punnaikuda in Batticaloa by the security forces as 10.

Security forces also seized 110 litres of fuel from an LTTE safehouse at Kalawanchikudy.